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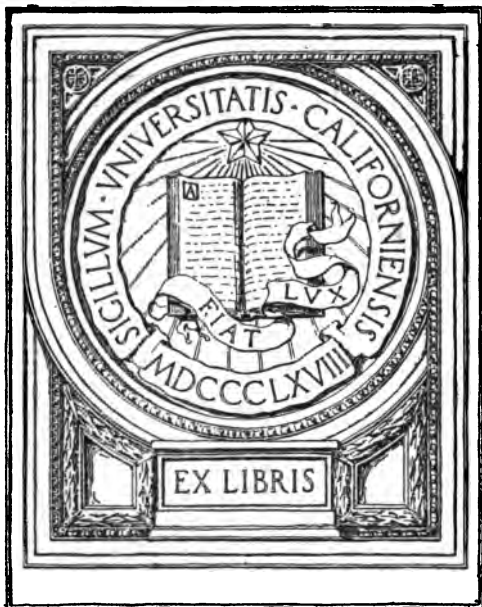
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# Ballades of Olde France Alsace & Olde Holland



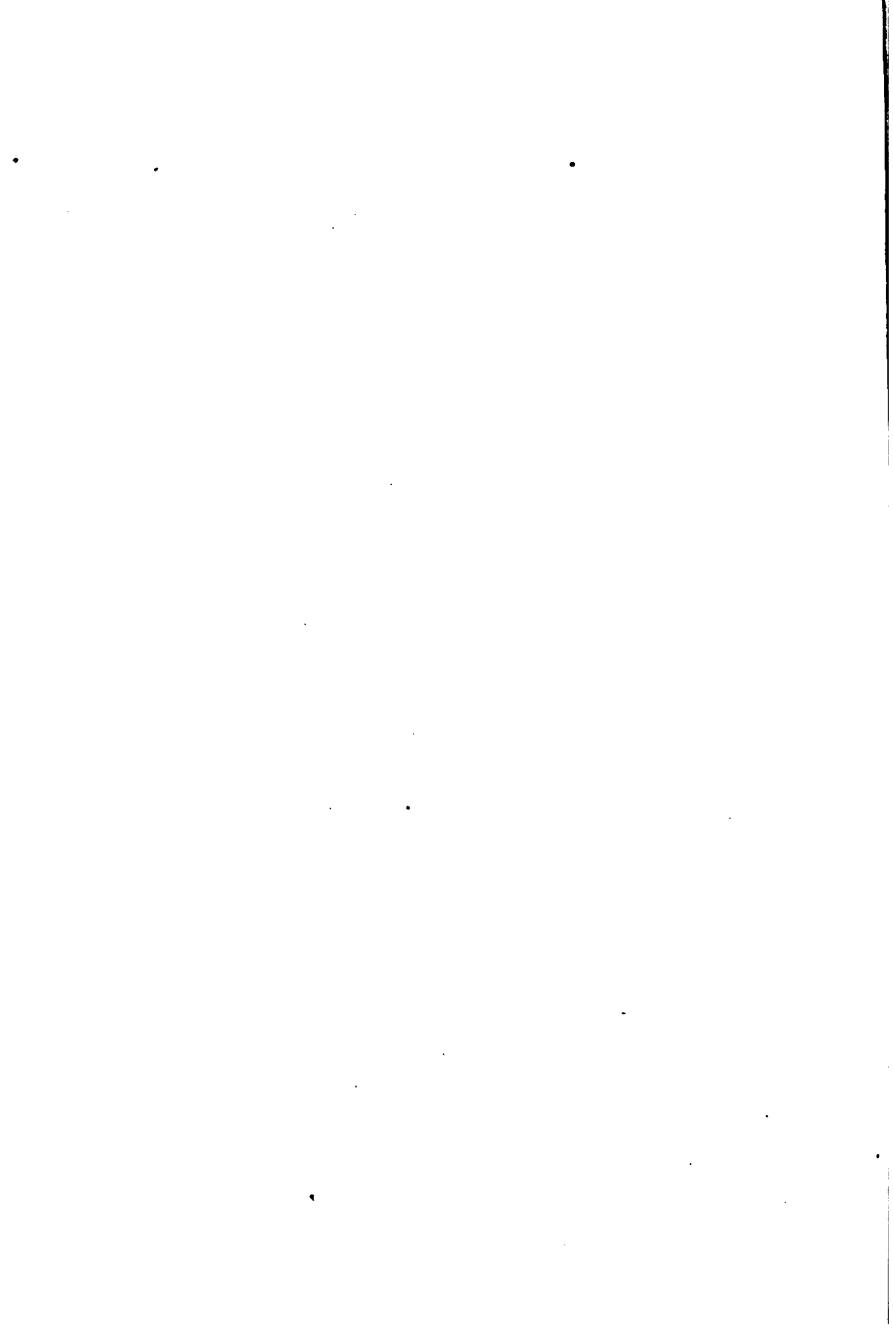
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# Ballades of Old<sup>e</sup> France, Alsace, and Old<sup>e</sup> Holland

By

FRANK HORRIDGE



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

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## PREFACE

**F**EW pursuits are more interesting than that of delving amongst the mouldering ruins of the past, and examining with care and close scrutiny the disappearing data, fading evidence, half-obliterated texts and awe-inspiring relics of ever receding ages, over which the ocean of oblivion is slowly, gradually, silently advancing. It is the vocation of some and the hobby of others. To build up again after the work of rescue, from fragments and faint indications, bygone eras of civilisation on which the haze of distance in time has descended like a great enveloping curtain is for many a life's work and a source of infinite enjoyment. The archæologist, the historian, the lexicographer each has his province. The narrator of legendary tales follows in their wake as a gleaner in that wide field that they have made their own, and it is but natural that he should borrow for his purpose a little here and a little there from the treasures they have gathered together. Their task is to collect, order, co-ordinate; his to spin a web of fancy round some object in their treasure-houses and to throw upon it such a variegated light as shall cause it to radiate forth in many coloured scintillations. Their paths lead them amongst a multitude of realities embedded in the circumjacent obscurity, but which the lamp of research enables them to lay bare and define; he in his wanderings rambles along byways and mazy lanes, through dark woodland glades into the mystery-laden

air of cloister or castle. There the spirits of the past still lurk and it is their whisperings that he has to chronicle.

It is to the lexicographer that he is most indebted. Whoever has turned the pages of that monument of literary labour, the *New English Dictionary*, must have been struck by the frequent recurrence of the tombstone-mark of obsolete expressions, and each volume must have appeared to him to be in a very large measure a cemetery of words. And yet how much lies in this common burial-ground of our forefathers' expressions that might with infinite advantage be recalled from the past to enrich the literary portion of our language and to give pith and point in some degree to that which we use in our daily life. There are apt expressions like 'to bite the law by the nose,' *i.e.*, to offend the law, 'to be a dog at a catch,' or to be skilful, 'to bar one bye and main,' or to close all issues to one, and many others which are full of raciness; there are words like avow and reclaim, both substantives, which are much to be preferred to the modern words avowal and reclamation, because they are shorter, clearer, more sonorous. And in returning to the idiom of the past we should be drawing nearer to that of Shakespeare. It is for these reasons and because old words and archaic expressions are in their right place in a ballad that free use has been made of them in the text, a course which had already been followed by Tom Taylor in his exquisite version of the

ballads of Brittany, and by others. It has not been possible to include in this edition many literary notes prepared to illustrate the use by great writers of the archaic expressions employed, which, wherever it was possible, have been verified in the *New English Dictionary*, and twelve of the series or collection of ballads have also been temporarily omitted. Owing to the nature of the subject slight errors are likely to occur, and for these, if after repeated revision there are any, I must ask for the leniency of the reader or critic.

F. H.

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## Ballades of Old France

### THE SONG OF CLEMENCE ISAURE

O bring me a rose, my lover true,  
O, bring me a rose with the morning dew,  
And climb to thy place on the terrace  
wall,

Where the woodbine nods to the cypress tall,  
And the blooms of wistaria blend for the eye  
The soft grey of the stone and dark blue of the  
sky.

In this opetide of life to the bird's note lend ear,  
For with carollings sweet in its airy sphere  
The lark above  
Doth whisper love.

O, come hither, come hither, my Gerard come,  
For the shrubs are a-bloom and the bees they  
hum,  
And the dragon-fly roams with its orb like a gem  
That might sparkle and shine in a diadem.  
And the gentle sough of the wind in the trees  
Like an echo now sounds from the far-off seas  
When a wave doth recede from a boulder-sown  
beach,

*opetide, spring-time.*

2      **The Song of Clemence Isaure**

Or like streams as they course through some  
pebbly reach.

My viol's strung,  
My heart is young.

Thou shalt list while I sing of the precepts wise  
Of our Court of Love met in grand assize.

I will trace thee the path thou should'st  
pursue,

If 'tis honour and knighthood thou hast in  
view.

I will pluck from thy heart all its rank wild  
weeds,

In whose stead I will sow but sweet virtue's  
seeds :

As of blossoms entwined of each quality,  
Of gentleness, truth, and pure constancy

I weave a crown  
For thy renown.

\*      \*      \*

O Gerard, the May of our love is past  
And its flow'rs have been reft by a rough, rough  
blast ;

For imprisoned and chained here I crouch from  
the ire

And unsparing rebukes of my stern-visaged sire.

As the roseate tints of the creeping dawn

By the darkest of clouds may be overdrawn,

So our love-begot hopes by a withering bale

Seem so blasted, alas, that I tremble and quail,

And black-browed care  
My cell doth share.

The Song of Clemence Isaure 3

Though my hand has been sought by a suitor of  
wealth,  
The great lord of broad acres and noble of  
birth,  
Though his gift be a castle and courtly train—  
Such a lure will be dangled before me in vain.  
'Twas my father who gave me the light of day,  
And what he bestowed he may take away.  
But intact I will keep what is only mine.  
Let in duress and woe my poor body forpine,  
My soul will flee,  
Dear friend, to thee.

As the cynosure guides the frail tempest-tossed  
bark,  
So one lingering hope have I still in my cark.  
To the court of King Philip, my Gerard repair,  
In his need of brave men he will speak thee fair.  
In the cause of his lilies one glorious deed  
May obtain thee a knighthood and favour as  
meed.  
On the day he requites thus the work of thy  
blade  
Thou perchance will recall a lone desolate maid  
Who reads the stars  
Through prison bars.

Thou shalt pluck the wild rose from the thicket  
hard by,  
Though its freedom doth cost me a heart-drawn  
sigh,  
For it wantons its scent on each tremulous gale  
*forpins, waste away.          cark, anxiety.*



#### 4      The Song of Clemence Isaure

As they silently steal on their way through the  
vale—

Thou shalt seek out some spot where the mari-  
golds blow,

For 'tis they are the token and emblem of woe,  
And of violets coy a sweet bunch thou shalt cull,  
For their perfume is wont my poor spirits to lull.

So may their charm  
Guard thee from harm.

\*           \*           \*

Whose steed did I hear at the castle door?  
'Twas my father, my father returned from the  
war.

His stern brow had been swathed in a bandage  
white

And his ash-coloured cheek filled my heart with  
affright.

His mailed destrier hung his head wearily low,  
With void flanks that the trace of long marches  
did show.

And o'erspent with fatigue and beclouded with  
rue

Were the looks of his travel-stained retinue.

But where was he  
So dear to me?

From the lips of my father, alas, I have learnt  
How the English each hamlet and cottage have  
burnt,

And how at Toulouse he did strive 'gainst the foe  
On the glais still dealing forth many a blow,

*destrier*, medieval war-horse.

The Song of Clemence Isaure 5

Till a steel-crested wave bore him down on the  
grass,

Where sore wounded he lay in a terrible pass,  
When a youthful esquire at the cost of his life  
Plunged to rescue him full in the midst of the  
strife.

He dared not name  
That youth of fame.

There's a chapel that stands near a myrtle grove,  
And 'tis thither by tortuous paths I oft rove.  
There the monks of the neighbouring monastery  
Sing *Requiem ei aeternam dona, Domine.*

When the evening dusk fades away in the night  
In a window I watch there doth burn a dim light.  
And my heart too doth burn and doth flame in  
my cheek,

For a voice and a hand all in vain do I seek.

When shall I sleep  
Some six foot deep?

This night as I lay on the couch in my room  
The soft rays of the moon chased away all my  
gloom,

And in Paradise bright in my dream did I stand  
With three gold'n flowers in my lily-white hand,  
Which as prizes I gave to Love's choristers three  
And one of that trio was dearest to me.

All is faded, alas, but my fortune I give  
That this scene of my vision on earth may still  
live.

Nigh is my end  
And death my friend.

## 6 The Daughter of the Death's-Man

### THE DAUGHTER OF THE DEATH'S-MAN

#### FYTTE I

**I**T was a may of seventeen led forth her geese  
to feed—

O 'twas a pretty sight to see that may fare  
o'er the mead.

And 'twas a youth most scholarly, a sophister  
was he,

Who book in hand had wandered forth that  
morn so fresh o' blee.

' Good-morrow, maiden, prithee tell what hiss  
thy silly flock

That, necks outstretched and heads bent low,  
each passer-by they mock ? '

' And were I scholared as thou art their thoughts  
then mote I spell,

Had I, sir clerk, as needs I must, a goose's wit  
as well.'

' Now marry ! bonny blouse I wis the cross-  
row's not thy forte,

Yet though a simple lass thou art, thou hast  
the quick retort.

*may*, maid.  
*mote*, might.  
*wis*, imagine, suppose.

*blee*, complexion.  
*spell*, relate.  
*crossrow*, alphabet.

## The Daughter of the Death's-Man 7

Come let us stroll a-down yon lané where  
canker-blooms we'll pluck,  
And tell the daisy's petals o'er for good or evil  
luck.  
The canker-rose it with thy cheeks in colouring  
may vie,  
But ravished by the wanton wind shall fall too  
soon and die.  
A lock of hair shalt gi'e to me, a lock of the  
golden hue,  
And for that gift I'll gi'e to thee the diamonds of  
the dew.  
' Grammercy, good sir, a pretty thought and ye  
would ha' good cheap,  
But for the gift ye'd ha' o' me my fortunes they  
would dreep.  
I may not gi'e a tress to you, a tress of the  
golden hue,  
For a spae-wife erst to me foretold that I that  
boon should rue.'

\* \* \*

### FYTTE II

The Provost's messenger hath come to the court  
of guard where rest  
The guardians of the peace alway to whom he  
brings this hest :  
Hol captain of the guard, go forth with a  
serjeant and pikemen three,

*good cheap*, a bargain.

*dreep*, droop.

*spae-wife*, witch.

*boon*, favour.

*court of guard*, the guard room or place where the guard  
muster.

## 8 The Daughter of the Death's-Man

And watch that each farer to Paris may go his  
lane unhurt and free.

Whoso in duels sheddeth blood, the Cardinal  
he hath said,

Shall quit as his due to the commonweal the  
outrage with his head.

Go forth then, captain, in his name, and seize  
and bring in those

With their copesmates all, who brawlers are, and  
bite the law by the nose.

And forth they went, the captain and his band,  
from the South gate they went forth,

And, fetching a compass through layland and  
tilled, their steps they bent to the North.

The whiles a-down a lane, as ye wot, all ere the  
day was old,

Where the pretty dog-roses blew a lad and a lass  
they strolled :

Hand in hand they went till the geese they  
hissed and on them bore amain

Two dashing young gallants, all frolickful, who  
sundered them a-twain.

'What have we here?' the one he cried, 'a  
flock of geese that lead,

With learning pacing in their wake all in a  
scholar's weed ;

*farer*, traveller.

*quit*, atone, make payment for.

*copestmates*, companions, associates.

*bite by the nose*, mock.

*fetch a compass*, go round in a circuit.

*layland* (or *lealand*), fallow land laid down to  
grass, not permanent pasture.

*weed*, garb.

## The Daughter of the Death's-Man 9

And maugre his mien that's most sedate, you  
will observe I pray,  
He rose up rathe from his bed this morn to greet  
this comely may.  
O ho ! the may, for by my fay, she's one whom  
we ken of old ;  
It is not the hearts of men she seeks but their  
heads to ha' in hold.'  
The scholar this ill could brook, and the while  
his stand before the maid  
He took, from its sheath right prestly forth his  
rapier he outbrayed.  
' So ho, my bawcock ', the gallant cried, ' what  
wilt thou with that tool ?  
Come cross it with mine a wee and I'll send thee  
hop-halt back to school ! '  
With that to work with their blades they fell and  
scantly did they heed  
How championed by a band of five the law  
came striding o'er the mead.  
' In the king's name hold ! Come be dogs at a  
catch, my men, quick haro ! they fly ;  
Sir scholar, this night in a lonesome tower 'twill  
be thy lot to lie.'

\* \* \*

*maugre*, despite.  
*fay*, faith.  
*prestly*, promptly, quickly.  
*bawcock*, fine fellow.  
*dogs at a catch*, skilful.

*rathe*, early.  
*hold*, keeping, custody.  
*outbrayed*, drew.  
*hop-halt*, limping.  
*haro !*, hue and cry.

## 10 The Daughter of the Death's-Man

### FYRTE III

In Paris was erst a lonesome tower and its walls  
were high and bare,  
And ill betid the luckless wight who found a  
lodgment there ;  
For in its court there stood a tree, a tree without  
a root,  
And maugre that it branchless was, it yielded  
red, red fruit.  
And when, unholpen and forlorn, at death's  
door a poor prisoner lay  
To and fro on guard about that hold four warders  
they paced alway.  
All's well, all's well, all's well three called, but  
the fourth he spake not so,  
Within his earshot it happed there came a foot-  
fall soft and low.  
' How now, my may, what fare ? Poor fare for  
one I wis—sad cheer—  
With golden locks like thine who e'er saw the  
Angel of Death appear.'  
' Naught boots I ween their golden sheen, for  
the world at me doth rail,  
And of those who to me say a word of grace  
their tongue is of little 'vail.'  
With that o'er the footbridge she prestly stepped  
with the key that the door would ope,

*erst*, before, ere.

*unholpen*, helpless.

*what fare* ?, what is the state of things ?

*sad cheer*, a sad state of mind.

*betid*, past tense of betide.

*hold*, prison.

## The Daughter of the Death's-Man II

That door through which scant one had passed  
but behind he had left all hope.  
She clomb the stair to a deep dark cell where  
there glimmered a dying ray.  
Had there been more light one mote ha' seen  
how her face was ashen grey.  
' Rise up, rise up and busk ye, sir !—my mantle  
ye must don.  
For a lock of my hair ye begged erstwhile and  
all ye shall ha' anon.'  
He doffed his coat, he donned her cloak ; with  
her kirtle he garbed him eke,  
About his brow they bound her hair till it hung  
down o'er his cheek.  
' Give heed, give heed to what I say, all as is my  
wont ye'll do ;  
And ye'll turn the key in your cell-door here,  
and the key in the great door too.  
Fair fall ye, gentle sir !—with a wife and your  
childer I see ye sit  
But back some day to this time and to me your  
thoughts it may be will flit.  
Mayhap ye'll think of the flowers we gathered all  
in this month of May,  
And eke how for one poor canker-bloom ye nigh  
threw your life away.'

\* \* \*

### FYTTE IV

' Say, prithee, sir priest, what errand be thine  
here at the Provost's gate,

*busk*, prepare oneself, get ready.

*fair fall ye !*, good luck attend you !



## 12 The Daughter of the Death's-Man

When the alder-highest are e'en asleep and the  
hour it groweth late ?  
' Now lythe and listen, Gate-ward bold, to the  
Provost I must win,  
Foredoomed there lieth a luckless maid, fore-  
doomed for naught of sin.'  
' It irks me much, sir priest, alas an she must  
meet her fate ;  
It is a fearful thing alway to break the sleep  
of the great.'  
And to the tower there came five men all  
through the murk and gloom  
As dreadful a band as eye e'er scanned, these  
harbingers of doom.  
' Ho ! warder, warder, in the name of the King  
and his Provost give heed and obey :  
Your prisoner yield to us that never again  
may he see the day.'  
And o'er the footbridge they have passed and  
through the great oak door,  
The Provost's officer and the death's-man's aids  
to the number of four.  
With a lanthorn dim they won the cell where a  
strange sight then they saw—  
A kneeling may who cowered like a lamb before  
the wolf of the law.  
' Now to your business, ye devil's imps, for the  
night is wearing out.  
Why stand ye there all four agaze ? What are  
ye then about ?

*alder-highest*, the highest of all.  
*lythe*, hearken, listen.  
*won*, reached, arrived at.

**The Daughter of the Death's-Man 13**

What have we here ? a sely maid, beshrew me  
as I live,  
Of a scant of grace she hath ta'en the place and  
'tis *her* life she'll give.  
For the prisoner flown she must atone or quit us  
of that ilk ;  
Must pay the fee, be it he or she whoso the law  
would bilk.  
And for that she doth love disguise forthy we'll  
find at need  
The wherewithal to deck her out all in a  
masking weed.  
A band across her eyne draw tight, besmear her  
milk-white brow,  
A wooden gag place 'twixt her teeth to plug her  
perjured mow.  
They heard these sombre words all four, but  
they were dumb for dread ;  
And palsied was that fair maid's tongue that  
mote ha' saved her head.  
For no bridegroom had she dared to hope, and  
when the folks they jeered,  
Her seemed that to wed with death might be  
from birth her foredestined weird.  
One heard a tumbril rumble forth or e'er the  
dawn had broke—  
The tree of death it lay therein, and she who  
feared the stroke ;

*sely*, simple, foolish.

*quit of*, rid.

*forthy*, therefore.

*weird*, lot, destiny.

*scant of grace*, ne'er-do-weel.

*that ilk*, the same.

*mow*, mouth.

## 14 The Daughter of the Death's-Man

And to Montfaucon on they fared where a many  
had come to dree

And on a gibbet gaunt hung there in that Geth-  
semane.

As nigh they drew to the lethal spot on the wing  
there rose ahight

A sable flock that circling round there whilom  
kept its flight.

Hard by there stood a scaffold low, and there  
the death's-man eke :

O, could the victim's tongue, made free, the one  
word ' father ' speak !

Haste, haste, sir priest, if come ye may to  
stay this horrid act,

Shall ill foil good in this world awry and the  
devil hath he a pact ?

O woe ! O dule ! the stroke is struck, a head  
falls to the ground,

And loosed are now the knots which held  
erstwhile its fair front bound.

The death's-man raught his hand to snatch the  
scalp by its shorn hair—

What was there in those watchet eyne to  
fascinate his stare ?

He staggered back ; with fire-eyed frenzy mad  
his blade he heft,

And at one blow, well dealt I trow, the officer's  
head he cleft ;

Then falling fast upon his corse a hail of blows  
they brast

Till naught was left but shreds and bones for  
dogs to break their fast.

*dree*, suffer, endure.  
*watchet*, pale-blue.

*dule*, melancholy.  
*brast*, burst.

THE DROWNING OF YS

**O** SLUMBERING harp of old Bretayne,  
That 'neath the hoar of the past hast lain  
Like a Norse drake sunk in the soundless  
main,

Awake, and let thy notes upwelling,  
As a distant bell that is faintly knelling,  
In mystic fragments weirdly spelling,

The tale of Gradlon of Ys relate,  
And of the doomed city's fate,  
That the great sea rose to obliterate ;

For the harper erst told how northwards faring,  
In quest of a field for deeds of daring,  
The king and his feres all dangers sharing,

Sailed on till a rock-ringed island green,  
Where he won the love of a Norse sea-queen,  
Of whose beauty the like no man had seen ;

And how when he quitted the strand where he  
sought her,  
As their prows ploughed on all through the dark  
water,  
She gifted him with a lovely daughter.

*draké*, viking's ship of war.  
*feres*, companions.

*spelling*, narrating.  
*till*, to, as far as.

**The Drowning of Ys**

And shriller than the wild wind's lay  
 Was heard the swart steed Morvark's neigh,  
 As the white waves round him 'gan to play.

But full soon the queen, on her death-bed  
 sleeping,  
 Left the lone, lorn king to fair Dahut's keeping,  
 Whiles o'er him there came a black grief  
 creeping.

And for that he mote bear it light,  
 By the festive board all richly dight  
 With wassail he wore out the night.

Spake Dahut to the old king wending,  
 'Like night and day in morning blending,  
 Here earth and sea have both their ending.

In yonder cove then that hight Ys,  
 Where the waves my feet ofttime do kiss,  
 Shalt build me a palace for my bliss.'

**DAHUT'S SONG**

Ocean, blue Ocean, roll me aland,  
 Roll me ashore on the golden sand.  
 Where the white steeds revel and play  
 Infant erstwhile cradled I lay;  
 Where the white steeds gallop arow,  
 Spreading their manes like the drifting snow,  
 On our brave war drake smoothly would glide  
 Thorough the welter of tempest-tossed tide,  
 Riding, O Ocean, on thy broad back,  
 Swift as the wind-swept volatile wrack.

*swart*, dark, swarthy.

*dight*, prepared.

Far away on the mid-main vast,  
 There it was my weird was cast,  
 'Twas my weird for power and might,  
 Ocean to thee my troth to plight.  
 And my need or list or will,  
 Thou shalt labour to fulfil ;  
 Thou shalt bring to me each day,  
 All that may my bent apay.  
 Ocean, blue Ocean, roll me aland,  
 Roll me ashore on the golden sand.

When upon thy boundless tide  
 Argosies deep-laden ride,  
 Neath dark tempest-mantled skies  
 Let thy serried billows rise,  
 'Pitching them like baubles where  
 Jagged rocks show sharp and bare,  
 That mine eyne may daily feast  
 On the treasures of the east.  
 All they hold shalt wash aland,  
 At my feet on the golden sand.

Swarthy seamen from their crews,  
 Men of mould with iron thews,  
 Ta'en from death amidst thy waves,  
 For and shepherded like slaves  
 Bought upon the open mart,  
 Shall of my meinie form a part,  
 Shall in my household daily serve,  
 Crooking the knee with shoulders curve.

*weird*, lot, destiny.

*apay*, satisfy.

*meinie*, attendants, retinue.

*list*, wish, desire.

*of mould*, well-embodied.

Ocean, blue Ocean, bring me to land,  
Stalwart youths, aye, a goodly band.

Fondlings some shall be for me—  
Passed the whim, their lot shall be  
In thy caves for aye to sleep,  
Where thy greenish waters creep  
In a twilight dim alway,  
Silvered by the fish's ray,  
Where their ears may hear no more  
Of thy surges rote or roar.  
Ocean, blue Ocean, roll me aland,  
Roll me ashore on the golden sand.

#### THE FISHER'S SONG

At the mid o' night, as I lay a-bed,  
Methought I heard a muffled tread,  
And I dupped the door and forth was led.

On through the murky night we bore,  
And ere long won the spray-swept shore,  
Where boats-dim showed, mote be a score.

Aboard we stept and hoised sail ;  
Around us there were faces pale ;  
The wind it freshened to a gale.

I seized the tiller for to steer  
Across the vasty ocean-mere.  
Those faces they were wan o' leer.

*rote*, frequent repetition.

*dup*, open.

*hoised*, hoisted.

*ocean-mere*, expanse of ocean.

*leer*, complexion, look.

Long while on on we ran adrift,  
With naught of light nor little rift  
In that dark curtained pitchy lift.

Upon my ears then fell a sound  
Of pebbles by the surges ground,  
And far a white streak stretched around.

The wind had dropt, the loose sail flapped,  
About the prow the wavelets lapped,  
And as I whiled a strange thing happed.

The farers whom we had inshipped,  
Had into the murk all silent slipped  
Like fallen leaves from branches stripped.

Our bark, methought, it seemed to ride  
Full lightly on a swelling tide,  
And sadly now the wind it sighed.

Low, low, its murmur to me said,  
In tones that made me quake for dread,  
'Here is the Island of the Dead.'

Then rose a whisp'ring far and near,  
And voices I wont erst to hear,  
Called back full many a death-struck fere.

Some wild as up-torn mandrake's groan,  
Some muttering low with tristful drone,  
While stevens eke made heavy moan.

*lift*, atmosphere.  
*tristful*, sad.

*farers*, voyagers, travellers.  
*stevens*, voices.



## The Drowning of Ye

An it be sooth mine eyne's attest,  
Oft glimpsed I on some dark wave's crest,  
Enlaced twain figures breast to breast,

Then by the backwash asunder tossed.  
Their lanes had met, their lanes had crossed ;  
For Love their lives they once had lost.

And as I listed, as I eared  
Long while that vocal ferment weird,  
A name I caught I oft ha' feared.

' O Dahut, Dahut,' a voice it cried,  
' By thee, alas, by thee we died,  
For thee about this isle we bide.

Full many a cheek hath thy bane made wan ;  
O Princess who sway'st in the castle yon,  
Of those who thorough death's door ha' gone.'

### IN THE CASTLE

' Karó, my page, by the hand thou hast kissed,  
Shalt do alway as I have list,  
To-morn, ere the sun is high aboon,  
Shalt rede the folk to be yare at noon,  
For that I may the rose shells gi'e,  
That lay their charm upon the sea.'  
' Liefer had I, Princess, that task were done,  
And the shells all given ere set o' sun.

*attest*, evidence.  
*to-morn*, to-morrow morning.  
*yare*, ready.

*eared*, gave ear to,  
*rede*, advise, enjoin.

A shell I bore erst to my ear,  
 And was ware of a sound filled me with fear.  
 The sea heard I lift its voice aloud,  
 As roar it doth 'neath the tempest's cloud ;  
 And thorough the thorp as I kept my way,  
 Oh 'twas evil enow I heard some say.  
 ' Now a sely youth, Karó, art thou,  
 Perdy, make not so tristful mow !  
 An it be boot for thy soft heart,  
 To me a spae-wife did impart  
 I ne'er should pass thro' death's dark door,  
 Till one of thy name had gone afore.'  
 ' Hark, Princess, hark, the wind doth bear  
 A murmuring sound upon the air.'  
 ' The sound thou hear'st it is the sea.  
 Look forth, rede me, what shade its blee.'  
 ' 'Tis verdant as the olive-fruit,  
 But maugre dark skies its voice is mute.'  
 ' O my betrothed, green, green per fay,  
 'Tis thus he lies by night by day,  
 Lies dormant as a snake in coils,  
 That shall swallow the fishers with their toils.'  
 ' Hark, Princess, hark, i' the welkin ahigh  
 Eftsoon a clamour comes stealing nigh.'  
 ' Enow, enow of thy boding say,  
 What the wind brings here 'twill take away.  
 To my steward haste bid him prepare,  
 Anon the board with lordly fare.

*ware*, aware.

*perdy*, an oath.

*boot*, remedy, cure.

*blee*, complexion.

*per fay*, by my faith.

*boding say*, evil prediction.

*sely*, simple.

*mow*, face, grimace.

*spae-wife*, witch, fortune-teller.

*maugre*, in spite of.

*eftsoon*, again, a second time.

With maunds of fruit and the grey wild fowl,  
 That carouse we may all cheek by jowl.  
 With the brimming bowl let the board be dight,  
 And we shall have a gaudy night.  
 The board was set and to the dame  
 Karó the page, her fondling, came.  
 'All for a feast is dight and yare,  
 And thy meinie bring the best of fare.  
 Hark, Princess, hark, there's an asper sound—  
 It riseth now from the lower ground—  
 It swells about the castle walls,  
 'Tis a mingle wild of shouts and calls.'  
 Then Dahut rose with her cheek aflush:  
 'Say whither my varlets do they rush?'  
 'They spar the doors, but freck and fast  
 Comes a hail of blows that the bolts may brast.  
 And, hark, I hear midst their yells of ire,  
 A cry, methinks, for fire, for fire,  
 For fire that they may bren the hold  
 With faggots piled high as trees in the wold.'  
 Then, maugre that her lip turned pale,  
 From Dahut's breast came nor sob nor wail.  
 'Look forth, look forth, Karó, at the sea,  
 Rede me, rede me what shade its blee.  
 They think with their garboil and flickering  
     flame  
 To gallow me forth from hearth and hame.

*gaudy*, gay, full of revelry.

*mingle*, mixture, medley.

*freck and fast*, vigorously and fast.

*bren*, burn.

*garboil*, tumult.

*asper*, harsh.

*spar*, bar.

*brast*, burst.

*hold*, stronghold.

*gallow*, frighten.

Methinks anon ye all may lie  
 Where fire, per fay, ye'll let to cry.  
 Karó, come say, what hast thou seen ?  
 Is the ocean black ? Is the ocean green ?  
 ' 'Tis black, 'tis black but with crested waves,  
 Full rudely, I ween, the land it laves.'  
 ' 'Tis well, Karó, bide here and wait  
 Whiles I to my father hie me straight.'  
 And fleet to the chamber she hath crept  
 Where a-days the old king dozing slept,  
 And from his girdle hath ta'en the key  
 That oped the flood-gates to the sea.  
 ' Now speed, my page, take this key, 'twill fine  
 This garboil i' the seething brine.'  
 ' The sea, O Princess, it doth rage,  
 Bid, bid farewell to thy whilom page.'  
 'Midst storm and bluster the sluice he hath won,  
 Farewell, poor page, thy work is done !  
 King Gradlon still he lay abed,  
 And Dahut in haste to him she sped.  
 ' Rise up, my sire, rise up and ride ;  
 Thy castle is beat by the flowing tide.  
 Thy castle is laved by the salt, salt sea,  
 And oh ! but Karó comes not to me.'

NEMESIS

' That the ocean boileth and roareth yond,  
 Say, Dahut, say to thy father fond,  
 For why on us falls this direful sond ? '

*let*, leave off, cease.  
*fine*, put an end to.  
*sond*, visitation.

*ween*, fancy, think.  
*yond*, yonder.

' 'Tis all along of thy miching folk,  
That the sea in its anger hath awoke.  
Haste, haste, we may not bide its stroke.'

And, gasted, along the twain they fled  
O'er the stone bridge and on, whither Dahut led,  
Till, mounting his steed, old Gradlon said :

' Like the wind, O Morvark, oft hast raced,  
Now drink the air, O thou swift-paced ;  
And, Dahut, hold me fast embraced.

Fast, fast-embraced, my daughter, hold me,  
For ne'er saw I the hungry sea  
Show a front so wild and black o' blee.'

' Speed, father, speed, win Plogoff's gap.  
Once past the crag that it doth cap,  
We may outride then all ill-hap.

The wind it leaves my heart achill,  
For in my ears it whistles till  
I hear the spae-wife's bodements shrill.'

' Trust Morvark, child, for never horse  
Hath held him pace in break-neck course ;  
Now shall he show his mettle's force.'

' Spur, father, spur ; on the surges rush,  
See, now with my knees they are aflush,—  
Oh that the cries of the storm would hush !

*along of*, on account of.

*miching*, sneaking.

*gasted*, terrified.

*drink the air*, fly, race or run very rapidly.

*win*, reach.

*held him pace*, kept pace with him.

For I catch in the hurly one like a groan,  
Ah me, ah me, it is not lone,  
For lithe there comes now moan on moan.

False-hearted one, what have I done  
That me wouldst tear from the light o' the sun,  
Who have given thee youths ever one by one?

Speed, father, speed, for naught can quell  
The flood that with its rising swell  
My girdle-stead doth now o'erwell.'

' Fear not, my child, a watery grave,  
An Morvark's crest the surges lave,  
His lane he'll find athwart the wave.'

They win now Plogoff's dark abyss,  
Where breakers round jagged rocks e'er hiss,  
The dread of the fishers erst of Ys.

There many a corse was seen to drift  
By the gleam of the fire-flaught's sudden rift,  
Whiles Dahut in terror her voice did lift.

' O bear me, father, bear me away ;  
The ocean roars, I hear it say  
" Manqueller, manqueller, thou art my prey." '

Nor needed then Morvark nor spur nor goad ;  
He hath swum the inlet, hath won the high  
road,  
The road he hath won, but with lighter load.

\* \* \*

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>lone</i> , solitary, single.     | <i>lithe</i> , pay attention.             |
| <i>girdle-stead</i> , waist.        | <i>fire-flaught</i> , flash of lightning. |
| <i>man-queller</i> , slayer of men. |   |

**The Drowning of Ye**

' Say, dweller in wind-swept Bretayne,  
What sight saw ye 'midst the storm and rain ? '  
' I saw a wild steed with flowing mane.

His neigh heard I, 'twas shrill and loud,  
And dimly in a passing cloud  
I saw an old man that lapped a shroud.'

# THE BROKEN TROTH

## THE WOOING

WHAT is the mermaid's plaintive lay  
That the winds aland they waft alway  
When the waves break fast on fair  
Auray?

They sing a song, an it fall on your ear,  
A song, a song, that is sad to hear,  
Of a may who erst was so blythe o' cheer.

O, oft a beetling crag she won  
To meet in tryst her lovèd one,  
What hour went down the westering sun.

And as it sank in a blood-red blaze  
They hand in hand would sit dreaming and gaze,  
Till the lift with night's veil it 'gan to haze.

But dwellers in Auray one morn  
Awoke to the clamorous sound of a horn,  
With its long-drawn notes on the air far borne.

*aland*, on land, ashore.

*may*, maid.

*erst*, formerly.

*cheer*, mien, countenance.

*beetling*, projecting, overhanging.

*won*, reached.

*lift*, atmosphere, sky.



And echoes from a grizzled keep  
 Awoke as from an age-long sleep,  
 And faintly broke the silence deep.

The gate-ward hath the gates unsparred.  
 With steeds forspent and ridden hard  
 Troop horsemen into the great courtyard.

And now adown the castle's stair  
 Hath come the Baron Gille de Vayre,  
 With head y-bent and silvering hair.

'Now hail, Le Roux,' the baron says,  
 As slowly he the group surveys,  
 'Thy face calls back long bygone days.'

'Hark back, good coz, and rest content,  
 That on an errand I am bent,  
 Which hath long syne your full consent.

But of my purpose grant that now  
 I make not a complete avow;  
 What time I have bethought and how;

And I had liefer it were sung,  
 When we sit by the board our cups among,  
 As it beseems, by my minstrel's tongue.'

'Twas eventide and the guests were gay,  
 When, chaunting soft in love-tuned lay,  
 The minstrel bespake fair Berthe, the may.

*gate-ward*, gate-keeper.

*unsparred*, unbarred, unbolted.

*forspent*, exhausted.

*avow*, avowal.

*syne*, ago.

*liefer*, rather.

THE MINSTREL'S SONG

'Twas within a garden fair,  
Where the sweetest flowers were—  
All the blooms of fulsome May  
Teeming in her brave array ;  
And a damsel there was eke  
With a soft and damask cheek.

Cupid had some fern-seed ta'en,  
For to thrall her he was fain ;  
And, ear-kissing, he did say :  
' Wherefore all this proud display ?  
Like these blossoms, gentlest maid,  
Wilt thou beam awhile, then fade ?

Wherefore then so fair o' feir,  
If no lover cometh near ?  
Wherefore then so douce a face,  
If no knight it may aggrace ?  
Cloistress leads her life for vain  
All the world goes twain and twain.

Make not dainty to man's suit.  
Love is like a golden fruit—  
Must be gathered in its prime ;  
Hence forslow not when 'tis time.  
It is in life's gilded morn  
That the fairest hopes are born.

*fern-seed*, to render himself invisible.

*fain*, eager.

*ear-kissing*, whispering in the ear.

*feir*, appearance, look.

*douce*, sweet, pleasant, sober.

*cloistress*, nun.

*make dainty*, to be loth, chary.

*forslow*, to be slow or dilatory.

*aggrace*, to favour.

*for vain*, in vain.

## The Broken Troth

Why then maiden, peeping, bide  
 At the door of wedding-tide ?  
 In the handfast thou wilt find  
 Sweetest bond that knows mankind ;  
 Forthy when two hearts agree  
 Seal it with a lover's fee.'

And when in fine his voice was hush,  
 Amany sought the mantling flush  
 That deepens to a maiden's blush ;  
 But turning white as a flaxen sheet,  
 With fireless eye rose Berthe from her seat  
 And out at the door she vanished fleet.

## THE CAVALCADE

' Thy bridegroom waits, my daughter dear ;  
 And when for thee I shed a tear  
 'Twill channels down my old cheek sere.'

' A sea of tears I eke would shed,  
 My father dear, an us 'twould stead,  
 But by our weird we maids are led.'

O gaily fared the bridal train,  
 As from the castle it burst amain,  
 With jester and minstrel as foremost twain.

But sadly, sadly one did ride,  
 My fay, it was the fair young bride,  
 And back she looked—she looked and sighed.

*handfast*, marriage contract.  
*in fine*, in conclusion, at last.  
*weird*, destiny.

*forthy*, therefore,  
*sere*, burn.  
*my fay*, faith !

## The Broken Troth

31

' Farewell, my Brittany, farewell,  
My bosom heaves like ocean's swell.  
Of my youth and love I hear the knell.'

Whiles Count Le Roux rode on a space,  
Him seemed as he scanned her gleeless face  
It showed for him but scant good grace.

' O ho ! my belle ; what all amort !  
A tearful eye and trist deport  
With our gay rout but ill doth sort.

Do off then melancholy's veil,  
For sadness paints a visage pale,  
And naught hath it of gain or hayll.'

' Bear, good my lord, an heart-heavy I,  
The memories of my home besigh,  
As they pangs awake at each broken tie.

The mariner he loves the sea.  
O, sad is the weird one's heart must dree  
When one leaves for aye one's own countrie.'

' Enow, enow, thy teen must sleep.  
Thee now, my belle, I have in keep ;  
With joy anon thy heart shall leap ;

*amort*, dejected, spiritless.

*deport*, bearing.

*hayll*, hale, well-being, health.

*dree*, suffer, undergo.

*keep*, charge.

*trist*, sad, sorrowful.

*sort*, agree, harmonise.

*weird*, lot.

*teen*, grief, sorrow.

For in the south we buoyance teach,  
And moping all and care-tuned speech  
With heyday joys and pastimes leech.'

Why doth the fair bride's jennet rear,  
Whiles in her watchet eyne so clear  
And o'er her visage spread sits fear ?

Why halts the rout, and turning white  
Stand a many spell-bound at some sight  
That gars them cross themselves for fright ?

Why pricking then each one his steed  
Break headlong all across the mead,  
As from the deil they fain would speed ?

' Aroint, aroint ! thou foul-mouthed hag,  
Thou spirit of the fen or quag,  
Wilt with thy filth my bride then dag ? '

' Care wither the cheeks of your bride abloom,  
And the curse of a wild witch on her womb,  
May it be fertile as the tomb.'

#### THE LOVER'S LAMENT

' O brook that 'gainst thy rocks dost chide,  
An my cark mote fare on thy arrowy tide.  
Far away to be sunk in the ocean wide !

*leech*, heal.

*gar*, cause, make.

*quag*, marshy or boggy

spot. *cark*, anxiety.

*watchet*, pale-blue.

*aroint* !, begone ! avaunt !

*dag*, bedaub, bemire.

*mote*, might.

An thy waters mote, as the balm that swages,  
Disfever my brain when it madly rages,  
Like prisoners beating the bars of their cages !

An thy current, like Lethe, mote blot from my  
mind

A hand and a face of one erst kind,  
That fickle have proved as the wanton wind !

Mote quench its thirst in thy flood the spitter,  
Whiles my cup I must drink to the dregs so  
bitter,

Till death from my woe shall be my quitter ! '

' So, lass-lorn youth, on this bridge dost sit,  
The whiles thy lady-love doth flit,  
O fie, O fie on the moonish tit !

All in an harbour a dove was cooing ;  
Now, prithee, his mate what is she doing ?  
For a falcon, alas, misliked their wooing.'

' Go, witch of the wood, avaunt ! avaunt !  
My heart is not tuned to gibe or taunt.  
Begone, begone to thy woodland haunt.'

' Nay list, sweet youth, to the air I falter,  
For quicker I weet than missal or psalter  
'Twill touch thy heart-strings, till their tune  
they alter.

*spitter*, young deer whose antlers begin to shoot  
or become sharp ; a brocket or pricket.

*quitter*, deliverer.

*lass-lorn*, forsaken by one's lass or sweetheart.

*tit*, a woman (contemptuous).

*weet*, know.

Say, jumps it not with thy humour well  
 That by my curse's magic spell  
 She's deemed to be leader of apes in hell ?

Or wouldst that a brood o' the red-beard's  
     raising  
 Round the ingle should sit in her false eyne  
     gazing,  
 With, poor spirit, thee in the blue flame blazing ?

Some finding frost are all unmanned,  
 And stripling wouldst like a John-a-Dreams  
     stand  
 With moody brow and palsied hand ?

I' the mid o' night when the moon is waning,  
 And our coz the owl in her bower is plaining,  
 Weird sisters we fate's links are enchaining.

So hie to us, lack-beard, an wilt be freed ;  
 For thy despond we have remede,  
 That'll tine the spark for red-hot deed.

*deemed*, condemned, doomed.

*leader of apes in hell*, old maids and childless women  
 were supposed to lead old bachelors in hell.

*ingle*, an open fire on a hearth.

*blue flame*, a blue flame was supposed to indicate the  
 presence of a spirit.

*finding frost*, meeting with difficulties, misfortunes,  
 or disaster.

*plaining*, lamenting.

*despond*, despondency.

*remede*, remedy.

*tine*, kindle.

THE LOVER SEEKS THE WITCH OF  
THE WOOD

THE LOVER

'Winds that thro' the wild wood rush  
Hurtle not, lie low and hush.  
Sleep, my fears and fleet alarms.  
Wave not, oaks, your giant arms ;  
Stretch not forth your roots like snakes  
Where my lane its crook'd way takes.  
Riotous with mad unrest  
Heart be still within my breast.  
In my ears I hear it thrum  
Like the beating of a drum.  
Thunder-shaken trees ye quake ;  
Th' earth methinks itself must ache.  
Fire-flaughts flickering in the gloom  
Whence doth peal yon awful boom ?  
Corrigans what direful crash  
O'er the heads of beech and ash !  
Mote I win the spae-wife's tryst  
For mine eyne they 'gin to mist.'

Thunders mutter round and round.  
Earth what forg'st thou underground ?  
Hell, where do thy legions lour  
Till the dreaded midnight hour ?  
In the blackest of the night  
Shades and ghosts all come to light,  
And to see them weirdly dance  
Armand waketh from his trance.

*fire-flaughts*, flashes of lightning.  
*corrigans*, sprites (in the lore of Brittany).  
*spae-wife*, fortune-teller ; witch.



## The Broken Troth

## THE LOVER

'Winged demons round me flutter  
 Piercing hoots I hear them utter.  
 Satan's imps, what fell delight  
 Gars ye fill my soul with fright?  
 Imps and jinns and all your kin,  
 Mote I to my lost one win,  
 I could front your terrors grim  
 To the soundless pit's dark rim.  
 Monarch with the cloven hoof,  
 'Gainst thy swart hosts I am proof.  
 Hark! I catch an eldritch cry,  
 Now afar and now anigh.  
 By some gnome am I misled?  
 Yon I mark a tree glows red,  
 And hard by the bow-backed crone  
 O'er her seething cauldron prone.  
 Wood-witch, 'tis to thee I wend—  
 Broken fortunes canst thou mend?  
 Be it so, awork! awork!  
 Hail the powers of the murk.  
 Haste! awork! and with thy charm  
 Potent make my blade and arm.'

## THE WITCH

'Redeless youth, wilt aidance gain?  
 Naught done here shall be for vain.  
 Step within the magic ring

*gars, makes.*

*eldritch, weird, ghostly.*

*yon, yonder.*

*redeless, devoid or destitute of counsel.*

*for vain, in vain.*

Where the bubbling broth doth sing.  
Fain from me wouldst ha' relief  
From thy gnawing sore fee-grief.  
Lover robbed of his fair mate  
Fills his soul with fineless hate.  
Powers of darkness gather here ;  
Satan, lord of hell, draw near ;  
In the cauldron throw thy might  
On these herbs at midnight dight—  
Hemlock plucked in marshy fens,  
Hellebore and bane of hens,  
Deadly nightshade with monkshood,  
And to make it strong and good  
Venom drawn from adder's fang  
In the throe of its death-pang.  
Dead as stone who this doth sip—  
Youth, thy poniard in it dip.  
Who therefrom shall get a scratch  
Nevermore shall open latch.  
Ha ! ha ! ha ! deep underground  
Sleep he shall a sleep most sound.  
Be his wound as sweet bee's prick  
No remede shall him e'er quick.-  
All his counts are ended slick ;  
He no more shall make his nick.  
Ha ! ha ! ha ! he shall lie dead :  
We can cut Lachesis' thread.

*fee-grief*, grief that is all one's own.

*fineless*, endless, boundless.

*remede*, remedy.

*quick*, quicken, revive.

*nick*, notch for keeping a score.

*Lachesis*, the one of the three Fates or Parcae who spun the thread of life from the distaff held by Clotho.

Blood shall trickle from his side  
 From a wound that shall gape wide.  
 At thy feet I see him lie  
 Breathless, mute with glazed eye.  
 In thy purpose do and dare ;  
 Hold you there, youth, hold you there.  
 And I mark a funeral train ;  
 Naught is like our compound bane.  
 All along of this false maid  
 One shall 'neath the sod be laid.  
 One shall sleep in cypress shade.  
 Stripling, say, art well apaid ?  
 Fare thee well upon thy quest ;  
 Fear not tempest, fear not pest.  
 Satan now thou hast as lord ;  
 He will fend from thee each sword.  
 Fire-drakes all vouch this for me,  
 Sights like these this youth shall see.  
 By the flame that burneth blue  
 All my bodements shall come true.  
 Fare thee well, youth, fare thee well ;  
 Loosed are now the powers of hell.'

## THE RIDE

' Why, O hind, art so pale  
 And dost stare down the dale  
 In the dusk and the gloaming,  
 With thy vacant eyne roaming  
 That are full of affright ?  
 Art thou frayed by a sprite ?

*hold you there*, remain steadfast in that frame of mind.

*apaid*, satisfied.

*fire-drakes*, Will-o'-the-Wisp (*ignis fatuus*).

*frayed*, frightened.

Why with limbs all unable,  
Thy wits grown unstable,  
Dost thou turn now and peer  
As though, faith, thou mote fear  
Some ill-hap ?

' 'Twas a white horse I saw,  
And it passed like a flaw ;  
Like the wind when it bloweth  
And in winter broad soweth  
A thick flurry of snow,  
Swift along it did go.  
Then with dark mane up-curling,  
Like a bandrol unfurling,  
Eke as wild and as fleet  
Came its shadow I weet  
Trip a trap.'

' Why, O dwellers in Norte,  
Do ye flock in a sort  
At the high-cross assembling ?  
And ye carlins, all trembling,  
Say what mote ye perceive  
At the fall of the eve,  
Whiles as evil were brewing,  
A fierce gust the leaves strewing  
Bids ye seek some near shroud  
There to crouch neath the loud  
Thunderclap ?

*weet*, know.  
*sort*, chance group ; number of persons who happen  
to be together.  
*high-cross*, the market place, where there was often  
a cross.  
*shroud*, retreat, shelter, especially temporary

## The Broken Troth

' As we whiled on the place  
 Came two riders apace,  
 Swift as arrows forth-speeding.  
 'Twas a white steed that leading  
 Like a fire-flaught for light  
 Shone athwart the black night,  
 And was gone in a twinkling,  
 Whiles we had ne'er an inkling  
 What his rider mote bode  
 As right through us he rode  
 Slick and slap.

But who there by the rood  
 In that moment had stood  
 Had seen suddenly veering  
 A swart courser high-rearing ;  
 While its nostrils aglow  
 Shot forth flamelets I trow,  
 And its rider, low louting  
 At the crucifix flouting,  
 Struck a full gerbe of sparks  
 From the earth, by yon marks,  
 With a rap.

And the ground fairly hissed  
 Whiles a sulphurous mist  
 Rose his dark form enshrouding ;  
 And with cloak spread, all clouding,  
 Or with winged horse I deem,  
 For 'twas thus it did seem,  
 Like a reever on foray

*louting*, bending.

*gerbe*, anything resembling in form a sheaf of wheat ;  
 a kind of firework.

*reever*, raider, marauder.

Or a lym on the quarry,  
Where the white steed still shone,  
He had sped and was gone  
Trip-a-trap.'

' Say, O woodman, what mean  
In this forest so green  
All the dried leaves wind-driven  
Round yon oak that is riven  
Through and blasted in twain?  
And this ken I would fain,  
What yon form is there lying  
Like a wight who is dying,  
That lies there like a log  
'Twixt yon youth and the dog  
That doth lap?'

' Mote I trust my poor een  
For the things I ha' seen!  
Where ye mark now twain horses  
Rode three wights in their courses,  
And one swart was as night;  
Swift as bird in its flight,  
For yon bay he was riding;  
They were all but colliding,  
When with sinister crack  
All a cloud thick and black  
Did enwrap.

But, O woe worth the boar!  
For see, see by the gore,  
At yon prostrate form dashing,  
And with tusk his side rashing,

*lym*, hound, leash-hound.  
*rash*, cut, slash, rip up.

*een*, eyes.

## The Broken Troth

How it furiously flew.  
 'Tis the Count, Count Le Roux :  
 Him no " Hunt's up ! " at daybreak  
 To the chase e'er may wake ;  
 For he lies in his gore,  
 And, O woe worth the boar !  
                                     O mishap ! '

## BEFORE THE CASTLE

' Majordomo, hark I pray,  
 For that this is holy day,  
 From the Countess word I bear  
 On the green all shall be yare  
 For a dance all in a ring  
 Where each one may have his fling,  
 Lads and lasses shall forsake  
 All their tasks and merrymake.'

' Maids and lads, your fardels fling,  
 Blythly join the festive ring,  
 For the dance a hall ! a hall !  
 Foot it briskly one and all !  
 Who his sides doth lard with sloth  
 Wins not grace nor comes to troth ;  
 Frolic through the livelong morn,  
 Far away they wind the horn,  
                                     Wind the horn.

*yare*, ready.

*a hall ! a hall !*, free space for the dancers.

*lard*, fatten.

*fardels*, burdens.

While the rotes and musettes play,  
 Gather all and dance the hay ;  
 Maids who here would find a spouse  
 Loiter not nor muse adrowse ;  
 Angle for the fresh-new wight  
 Till his love the bait shall bite ;  
 When ye-lead him homeward tame  
 Then full-hearted cry ye game,  
 Cry ye game.

To the Countess sing a song—  
 Naught that's dree and naught that's long—  
 Naught of cark and naught of woe  
 'Tis the Count who wills it so.  
 Grave all sorrows far away ;  
 O'er their tombs strew posies gay ;  
 For by sighing one grows weak,  
 And the face doth pale and peak  
 Pale and peak.

## THE DEATH SCENE

Yet stint awhile with song and dance,  
 And on yon hillside throw a glance.  
 Lo ! there a group doth slow advance.

Is yon the stag on sumpter horse ?  
 Through brake and fern and prickly gorse,  
 Full short hath been his morning's course.

*rotes*, a kind of cymbal.

*musettes*, a musical instrument.

*the hay*, a round country-dance.

*fresh new*, unpractised.

*dree*, sad.

*stint*, cease.

*cry game*, cry victory.

*grave*, bury.



No stag on sumpter horse is borne,  
Nor triumph note of bugle-horn  
Awakes the echo of the morn.

The pack is mute, the yeomen tread  
With downcast looks of awe and dread.  
Woe worth the day ! the Count is dead.

Mark how an ashen hue hath crept  
Where erst the mantling blood oft leapt,  
When anger o'er that visage swept.

Behold, O Countess, here thy lord,  
The blood-gouts from his side all gored—  
They tell of ruthless horn or sword.

Say, youth, who dost impassive stand—  
By thee, belike, he was trepanned  
And brought to death by thy fell brand !

See how his lip is proud and haught,  
Red-handed they the wight have caught,  
'Twas with yon dirk the deed was wrought.

Seize, seize his dagger ! it shall tell  
What in the wood erewhile befell  
False factour of this work of hell.'

'Cease, cease this garboil—'tis my hest,  
The poniard in my hand may best  
To me, to all, the truth attest.'

*haught*, haughty.  
*garboil*, tumult.

*factour*, perpetrator.  
*hest*, command.

' Hark to the Countess, all, give heed.  
That wrench the weapon now hath freed.  
Alack ! alack ! her arm doth bleed.'

' It is a scratch and nothing more,  
Upon his blade was naught afore—  
So write no crime upon his score.'

' There stands one blood-gout dark and thick :  
'Tis all and from one little prick—  
And yet she turneth pale and sick.

Lo ! mark her eyne range wandering round.  
Alack ! she sinks upon the ground,  
She passes now in mortal swoond.

O'er that youth's face a shade hath past,  
It changes to a death-like cast.  
These words he mutters low, his last,

' Beneath the sod one shall be laid,  
And one shall sleep in cypress shade,  
One grave for twain our weird hath made,'

Then where the dagger lies apart,  
His hand outstretches in swift dart  
To plunge it in his breaking heart.

Woe worth the day ! Woe worth the boar !  
Three corses lie all stained with gore.  
Woe worth the day ! Woe worth the boar !

*swoond*, swoon, fainting fit.

*weird*, destiny.

## 46 The Dauphin and the Dead Man

### THE DAUPHIN AND THE DEAD MAN

THE GRAVEDIGGER'S SONG:

THE TANNER'S DAUGHTER<sup>1</sup>

**A** TANNER he had a daughter fair :  
He checked her quirks as he curbed his  
mare,  
Till oh, the beauty, she was ware  
Short was the length of her tether.  
Heigh ho ! heigh ho !  
Though the north wind bite,  
An thy skin be tough,  
'Twill be enough  
To fend thee quite,  
Heigh ho !

But when in fine his last he breathed,  
And goodman lay with ivy wreathed,  
To her as dower he had bequeathed  
Naught but a skin like leather.  
Heigh ho ! heigh ho !  
Though ill-will bite,  
An thy skin be tough,  
'Twill be enough  
To fend thee quite,  
Heigh ho !

<sup>1</sup> In Bremen and in Malta are places where the skin of those who are buried there becomes tanned or turns into leather. It is to this fact that one must attribute the legend of *The Tanner's Daughter*.

*quirk*, caprice.

*ware*, aware.

*fend*, protect.

**The Dauphin and the Dead Man 47**

It was that maiden's list alway  
To pace an hour with a lover gay,  
Till all the neighbours they 'gan say  
' There they go through the heather ! '

Heigh ho ! heigh ho !  
Though envy bite,  
An thy skin be tough,  
'Twill be enough  
To fend thee quite,  
Heigh ho !

But with her lover she would walk,  
For nothing could that fair maid baulk ;  
A fig for their looks !—and all their talk  
Weighed on her like a feather.

Heigh ho ! heigh ho !  
Though malice bite,  
An thy skin be tough,  
'Twill be enough  
To fend thee quite,  
Heigh ho !

And here my song it fain must halt,  
So count it not to her a fault  
If she within a sombre vault  
Smiles with her lips of leather.

Heigh ho ! heigh ho !  
Fear not men's spite,  
An thy skin be tough  
'Twill be enough  
To fend thee quite,  
Heigh ho !

*list, desire.*

## 48 The Dauphin and the Dead Man

### THE PRINCE AND THE GRAVEDIGGER

#### I

' Hold, sirrah, with thy song,  
Mayhap 'twill prove too long  
A monotony.  
Why delver for the dead  
Dost lay each one abed  
With a lullaby ? '

#### II

' O prince, if I mote tell,  
'Tis but a poor man's spell,  
Which is this wise :  
For whiles I fill my ears  
No sprite can wake my fears  
Nor front my eyes.'

#### III

' And can, O coistrel say,  
The charm that beats dismay  
In thy lay's force  
The errant spirit daunt,  
To which shouldst gi'e th' avaunt  
Of yonder corse,

#### IV

That lies encoffined there,  
Where the birds may lay him bare  
And work him ill ?  
Why to this luckless wight  
Withholdest thou the rite  
Thy tools fulfil ? '

*mote, might.*

*gi'e (give) the avaunt, to dismiss.*

The Dauphin and the Dead Man 49

V

' An prince he maketh halt,  
He lies there through default.  
Ere death each cit,  
It is our ancient use,  
Of debts himself must loose,  
And be full quit.'

VI

' Go, fellow, this purse take,  
And for sweet mercy's sake  
Wipe from his score  
All that he still doth owe,  
That he may undergo  
No insult more !

VII

Alack that one must dree  
Thus in our fair countrie,  
And find great let ;  
And, though by death released,  
Must lie like some dead beast,  
And all for debt.'

VIII

' Laud, prince for this thy grace,  
That buyeth him a place  
Out of the sun ;  
For when our heyday 's past,  
'Tis well to rest at last  
Out of the sun.'

*dyes*, suffer.

*let*, hindrance.

*laud*, honour, praise.

*grace*, favour bestowed ; exercise of kindness.

50    **The Dauphin and the Dead Man**

THE SAILOR'S SONG

O, heave a-ho !  
Let the fierce wind blow,  
Till with tails aflow  
    O'er the ocean-mere

The white steeds dash,  
And afoam they plash,  
As our prow they lash  
    In wild career.

'Twas in Vigo Bay  
That our carack lay,  
And rocked night and day  
    So lazily.

When one forward stept,  
The Dauphin yclept,  
Who aboard had leapt,  
    Oh, great was he !

And at his all-hail  
All with ready vail  
We hoisèd sail,  
    And our anchor weighed.

And we ploughed the main  
Till the moon did wane  
Once and again,  
    For the wind it stayed.

*ocean-mere*, the expanse of ocean.  
*all-hail*, a general greeting.  
*vail*, acquiescence ; submission.  
*hoisèd*, hoisted.

The Dauphin and the Dead Man 51

But a barque we nighed  
In the morning-tide,  
That low did ride  
In our path ahead.

When her we did cote  
We saw her flag float,  
That struck a dread note,  
The sign of the dead.

But our bowmen wight  
Sent of arrows a flight ;  
Well aimed, well pight,  
At her crew aft and fore.

And a craven fear  
In their looks did peer,  
As with ashen leer  
They bent to the oar.

Though they bade us a base,  
Yet we held them pace  
In a long stern chase  
Till evenfall.

And or e'er in the mirk  
They had managed to lurk,  
With such as their work  
Had brought them in thrall.

*cote*, come up with ; overtake.

*pight*, pitched.

*bid a base*, challenge.

*held them pace*, kept up with them.

*mirk*, gloom, darkness.

*wight*, active, strong.

*leer*, complexion.



## 52 The Dauphin and the Dead Man

Whiles alongside we drew,  
Midst that recreant crew  
Twain dames we saw too  
Of high degree.

Then we sprang all aboard,  
And the Prince with his sword  
Smote that hell-doomed horde  
So evil o' blee.

And in fierce *melée*  
They held us at bay,  
As amidships the fray  
Waxed deadly and dour.

And the Prince naught would check  
Till he slipped on the deck,  
When he felt on his neck  
The heel of the Moor.

That dark chief he heft  
His blade that he weft,  
And his skull would ha' cleft,  
When a bell it tolled.

With an iron clang  
It solemnly rang,  
And the barque with a pang  
Uneasily rolled.

*blee*, complexion, look.  
*heft*, raised.

*dour*, obstinate, hard.  
*weft*, waved.

## The Dauphin and the Dead Man 53

For the land we were nigh,  
And our vessels hard by  
Stood a chapel a-high,  
Where they tolled a knell.

And in the dim light  
There broke on my sight  
Like a film, a sprite,  
Let loose by a spell.

And it rose in the spray,  
And straight held its way,  
To that chieftain's dismay,  
To the spot where he stood.

For fast in its fold,  
In a clasp that struck cold,  
Of him it laid hold  
'Neath its watery hood.

Like rats then flew  
That leaderless crew,  
And captives two  
Breathed freedom's sweet air.

And the bell aboon  
Changed its note full soon  
To a bridal tune.  
O, the bonnibel fair !

*fold*, embrace.

*aboon*, above.

*bonnibel*, handsome girl.

## 54 The Dauphin and the Dead Man

It changed its note,  
That we all mote  
With viol and rote  
Dance the hay on the green.

O, heave a-ho !  
Let the fierce wind blow,  
Till the waves overflow  
Each brigantine.

### THE BRIGAND'S SONG

Here 'neath the greenwood tree  
Now list to me, my feres.  
He levies but his fee  
The rover who pickeers.

He kings all too, I ween,  
For miles on miles around ;  
He hath a broad demesne  
That lines can not embound.

The poor are not his prey,  
'Tis naught they have for fear ;  
The rich his voice may fray,  
When they his ' Lay by ' hear.

*dance the hay*, dance in a ring.  
*brigantine*, piratical vessel.  
*feres*, comrades, companions.  
*pickeers*, robs, pillages.  
*kings*, rules, governs.  
*demesne*, domain.

*ween*, fancy.  
*fray*, terrify.

## The Dauphin and the Dead Man 55

So, golden youths, advise,  
Take keep, ye high and great :  
In him ye may agnize  
The instrument of fate.

And, if his shadow fall  
Upon a scion of France,  
Busk ye in haste his pall,  
With death full soon he'll dance.

So, duke, rest well apaid  
With this our solemn pact ;  
For on a plot well laid  
Shall follow swift the act.

### THE PRIEST'S TALE

Prince, to me no thanks thou ow'st.  
Valiance little can I boast,  
But to God be grateful.  
Mortals we oft grope our gait  
Where life's mazes us amate,  
And each step is fateful.

'Twas about the cockshut hour,  
That I sat within my bower,  
Sat and gently slumbered.  
And a vision to me brought,  
Forms and faces fancy-wrought,  
Faces dusk and umbered.

*advise*, reflect.

*agnize*, recognise.

*apaid*, satisfied.

*amate*, daunt, dismay.

*cockshut*, twilight ; when woodcocks were caught  
in cockshuts or glades in woods.

*take keep*, take care

*busk ye*, make ready.

*gait*, way, road.

56    **The Dauphin and the Dead Man**

All to me seemed passing strange,  
As thro' dreamland I did range  
    Midst those airy creatures ;  
Until one my heeding hent,  
O, he was of sad ostent,  
    Dead-pale were his features.

Back to me brings that countenance,  
Sailing in a ship to France  
    Fraught with his bales compacted,  
My poor sire, full soon to be cast  
On the rocks by the tempest's blast,  
    Weft with his fortunes fracted.

Dearest sprite, it beckoned me  
With a parling look and plea,  
    Till I fain must follow.  
'Thwart the treen it found its lane,  
On until our stone-roofed fane,  
    Down by the brook in the hollow.

There heard I a bell that knolled,  
As if it a passing told.  
    Rood and wafer bearing,  
Five in holy vestments dight,  
Forth we trudged till lost in night,  
    With the sprite fore-faring.

*heeding*, attention.  
*ostent*, appearance.  
*racted*, broken.  
*freen*, trees.  
*fore-faring*, going before.

*hent*, seized.  
*weft*, a castaway, waif.  
*parling*, speaking.  
*until*, as far as.

## The Dauphin and the Dead Man 57

I awakened at a note,  
Ringing like a hunter's mote  
From a horn far distant,  
But that visage I had seen,  
It was still before mine een,  
Speaking with mien insistent.

Out of hand my way I took,  
Down the bent that meets the brook,  
With that dear sprite aye leading,  
Knolled the bell, and five as afore,  
Passed we the chapel's open door,  
Eager but solemnly speeding.

Thorough the brake our way we kept,  
And as darkness round us crept,  
White-faced the moon was looming ;  
At our torches' glare the deer,  
Startled, fled away for fear,  
Fled and were lost in the glooming.

And as a dingle we betrod .  
Started twain figures from the sod,  
Whiles one lay extended.  
But for the light and the sacred host,  
And for the lead of that poor ghost,  
Prince, thy life they had ended.

### THE PRINCESS'S LAMENT

The Night wears out,  
And far away  
A sky all grey  
Rings us about.

*mote*, a note of a horn or bugle.  
*bent*, slope.

*een*, eyes.

58 The Dauphin and the Dead Man

And here no beach  
The flood doth show,  
That lays all low  
With its waters' breach.

Round on ilk hand,  
Where they devastate,  
Like one sole ait  
This tower doth stand.

My husband, oh !  
Where canst thou be ?  
No barque I see,  
And all 's a-flow.

And in my heart  
Of hope nigh blank,  
Grief growing rank  
Inflicts its smart.

THE PRINCESS AND HER LADY-IN-  
WAITING

' O, Princess, look !  
What there doth glide  
Where the swelling tide  
Runs like a brook ?

For yon see I  
Twain corses float  
But whence I note.  
This stair they nigh.

*breach*, breaking of waters as over a vessel.

*ilk*, each.

*ait*, isle.

*note*, know not.

Ay, Princess, see,  
One is, perfay,  
By his array  
Of the gentilrie.

But other guess  
Is Yonder Jack,  
Whose brow looks black  
Beyond all cess.'

'The duke! O fate!  
Another suit  
Thee had brought more boot  
Than all thy hate.

Joana dear,  
What can portend  
His dismal end  
With this fell fere?'

#### THE DAUPHIN'S TALE

My Inez, my gentle bride,  
'Tis I who at thy side  
Will till the morning-tide  
Rede thee what me befell:

How in the dawn-tide grey  
The royal hunt broke way,  
With dogs the stag to bay,  
And cantered down the dell.

*perfay*, by my faith.

*gentilrie*, gentry.

*Jack*, boor.

*beyond all cess*, beyond all measure.

*boot*, profit, advantage.

*array*, habiliments.

*other guess*, of another kind.

*fere*, companion.



## 60 The Dauphin and the Dead Man

My steed was swift and strong,  
And blithe jaunced I along,  
As gay as the birdlets' song  
When all is brag and boon.

But the lift grew sudden swart  
As by an evil sort :  
The horn had rung the mort,  
'Twas nigh the point of noon.

And I was far aloof,  
Nor naught to my behoof  
Could see nor friendly roof  
Where I awhile could host.

And as I passed a hurst  
The storm seemed at its worst ;  
Methought a cloud had burst,  
For then it ragèd most.

Full soon my way I missed,  
For little there I wist.  
Of wood and wold ilk list  
Was blurred by sheets of rain.

And thorough the waste so dern,  
I came to a swollen burn—  
Left me no whither to turn  
For it barred me bye and main.

*jaunced*, rode hard.  
*boon*, prosperous, gay.  
*aloof*, away, distant.  
*hurst*, wood.  
*list*, boundary.  
*bye and main*, wholly, altogether.

*brag*, lively.  
*lift*, sky.  
*host*, lodge.  
*wist*, knew.  
*dern*, solitary.

## The Dauphin and the Dead Man 61

'Twas then I heard arear  
A voice that seemed full near,  
And turning to give ear,  
Or answer the halloo,

Upon the duke set eyes ;  
And 'neath a falsers' guise,  
That there he was waywise,  
With him he bade me go.

We rode a little space,  
When I beheld a face,  
For me had little grace,  
'Twas nigh a hidden cave.

For that I naught mote rue  
My steed as winged he flew,  
For there saw I the clew,  
The clew of a crooked knave.

The light it 'gan to fade  
As for yon stream I made,  
O, how I hoped to vade,  
And thus their scheme to dash.

Methought it was for vain,  
For soon heard I the twain,  
Who followed me amain,  
Hard in the waters splash.

*falsers*, deceiver.

*waywise*, acquainted with the ways or roads of a place.

*mote*, might.

*clew*, plot.

*vade*, vanish.

*for vain*, in vain.

## 62 The Dauphin and the Dead Man

But 'gainst that torrent's force  
Naught could nor man nor horse,  
As it swept us in its course  
Through brake or over mead.

I sought some friendly bank  
Where peered the reed tops rank ;  
Alack, my grey he sank ;  
Farewell, my gallant steed !

My end then I did fear  
In that waste of waters drear,  
When a barque came floating near—  
Meseemed that it was void.

With that I was fain to shift,  
And through the mirky lift  
Seemed aimlessly to drift,  
By that frail vessel buoyed.

Then, as I sat astern  
And for the day did yearn,  
A form I could discern  
That steered it at the prow.

And dimly in my mind  
There passed a face outlined,  
Of one to a grave consigned  
With alms I did endow.

And, though to speech impelled,  
With it I converse held,  
That form in silence dwelled  
As one who mote not speak.

*lift, atmosphere.*

## The Dauphin and the Dead Man 63

And as the night wore on  
It ever grew more wan ;  
And wholly it had gone  
Afore the dawn's first streak.

I thank thee, gentle sprite,  
That through the mirk mirk night  
Hast steered my vessel light,  
All laded with me and my cark.

But it was only there,  
At the foot of yonder stair,  
That I at length was ware  
A coffin had been my bark.

There saw I what had happed,  
For in mist, as a shroud still lapped,  
Lay twain from life now rapt,  
All in their watery grave.

The duke there I ha' seen  
With his hair all boltered and green,  
And him of the horrid mien—  
The brigand of the cave.

*cark, anxiety.*

## CALAIS

## A BALLAD

WAIL and weep ! Pour out your pity  
 Wail and weep for the fallen city !  
 France hath seen the foe at our gate,  
 France hath left us in our strait,  
 To our fate.

'Long of his slain key-cold now lying,  
 Edward to us his grace denying  
 Doomed our citizens all to death,  
 Doomed a city's folk at a breath,  
 At a breath.

Spake his barons then assembled  
 ' Calais hath kneed, at thy frown hath trembled,  
 King an thee one mote areed,  
 Hate but reaps a worthless meed,  
 Poor indeed ! '

Answered the King : ' As approof and token  
 That they are now in spirit broken,  
 Six shall dree for all the rest,  
 Six choice-drawn among the best,  
 'Tis my hest.

*'long of*, on account of.  
*approof*, proof.  
*hest*, command, injunction.

*areed*, counsel, advice.  
*dree*, suffer.

Barefoot, bareheaded, white sheets wearing,  
Hither shall fare six Calais' keys bearing,  
Round their necks the hempen twist,  
That I may do with them as I list,  
As I list !'

Eustace de Saint Pierre addressing  
Calais' folk, all round him pressing,  
Out of his noble heart thus spake :  
' God on ye all for Christ's dear sake  
Pity take.

Danger clouds the day and sorrow,  
Who shall brighten now your morrow  
May in the Saviour's grace affy  
Though he Edward's wrath aby,  
Though he die.

For that from evil I may fend ye,  
I with others some will wend me  
Till the camp of England's King,  
Where his tents all glistening  
Us enring.'

Thorough a throng of townsfolk weeping  
See the six their way are keeping,  
Girt in sarks for all array ;  
At the gate they turn and say  
' For us pray.'

*affy*, trust.  
*aby*, suffer, be exposed to, undergo.  
*fend*, protect.  
*till*, as far as, to.  
*sarks*, shirts.

Yonder England's King is seated :  
All expect his justice meted.  
Lo ! the six they have appealed ;  
But his lips, with anger sealed,  
No sound yield.

Turning from the six all kneeling,  
With a gust of bitter feeling  
Edward cries : ' Let axe or dirk  
Fine this scene that me doth irk ;  
Quick to work ! '

Now for vain is interceding  
Now for vain thy barons' pleading.  
Of the wars that thou dost wage  
Shall one find, King, at no stage  
Bloodless page ?

Angel of mercy here appearing !  
List, O King, to thy queen anearning.  
' Gentle lord, I crossed the sea,  
Though great peril 'twas for me :  
This for thee !

Ne'er of thee have I sought favour :  
As thou lovest Christ thy Saviour  
Grant this boon of thee I crave,  
That my tongue these six may save  
From the grave.'

' Philippa thy gest doth plainly  
Bind my hands, albeit faintly  
I had known thee otherwhere.  
Take these objects of thy prayer  
In thy care.'

*fine*, put an end to. *gest*, action, act. *faintly*, gladly.

A FOOL'S SONG

THE MADNESS OF CHARLES VI. OF FRANCE

(Sung by Jacques Plaisantin<sup>1</sup>, the King's Jester)

**S**OFT as on down from the goose's breast,  
 Uncle, thy wont it was to rest  
 Long in the lap of pleasure.  
 Honey-tongued courtiers thy cup did fill,  
 Brimming it o'er oftwhiles but ill  
 Knowing the royal measure.

Pleasure at court it can be bought,  
 Buyers pay twice as eke they ought :  
 Uncle thy cup ran over.  
 Court-bred asses no hay will eat,  
 Round they nose for their journal treat,  
 Splitting their sides with fresh clover.

Feasting well so we drank to boot,  
 Feast on feast it followed suit  
 All through the Ember Evens.  
 Fasting time hath eke its due,  
 Tarries not and will not sue  
 Casting about for a grievance.

<sup>1</sup> Plaisantin was the name given to one of the three actors in the old French farces. We may suppose that in course of time it became a family name.

*journal*, daily.

*Ember Eve*, the eve before certain days of fasting.



Riot at length it did break out,  
Raging enow stout hearts to dought,  
All in the sconce of this good land  
Garred it was by a man in his shirt.  
Coistrel, thy garb should ha' been like dirt,  
Thou who wonnst in the woodland.

Silent woods all sounds enhance,  
Down on a helm there fell a lance,  
Hollow it sounded, hollow.  
Those asleep they woke astart,  
Chance blows a kingdom can dispart,  
Mark now the scene that will follow.

Out with his sword the King then struck,  
Fleers there were who fled like buck—  
I could have died wi' laughter.  
Fleers there were to the tale of ten,  
Fleers from him all ten the King's men,  
King thou wert conquered after.

Twain fools are now I weet at court—  
'Twixt the twain we should ha' sport ;  
One but he lacks good schooling.  
Brother fool, I can not sleep,  
For thy poor pate I fain must weep,  
There is no joy in fooling.

*dought*, make afraid.  
*sconce*, headpiece, head, brains, wits.  
*garred*, caused.  
*coistrel*, mean fellow, churl.  
*dispart*, break up, disunite.  
*tale*, number.  
*weet*, alternative form of wot, know.

' Shepherd, thy flock where mote it be ? '  
' Ah, that I its loss must dree,  
Far on the moor they're straying.'  
' Swineherd, thy pigs whence hast thou led ? '  
' Forth from the court where they were bred,'  
    ' Knaves they were always playing.'

' How is thy master or mistress hight ?  
Tell me I pray, and thee I'll requite  
Graciously, gratis': ' Grammercy,  
She whom I serve with her magic wand,  
Lives in a distant castle yond,  
    Hight is the lady Circe.'

*mote*, might.  
*hight*, called.

*dree*, endure, bear.  
*gratis*, freely.

## 70 An Invitation to Dine with the Cardinal

### AN INVITATION TO DINE WITH THE CARDINAL

**H**AIL! farer, hall! This rock may shroud  
Us twain the while yon black-faced  
cloud  
Bursts in vociferations loud!

My luck, perfay, I well mote curse  
For that my plume will look the worse  
Should now the heavens me asperse.'

'Now, fellow farer, welcome be;  
Aboon we have a good roof, see!  
This cave may house both you and me.

And for your feather, well I trow,  
Though light as air yet it may show  
What way the winds of fortune blow.

All well beseen, in fine array  
Hold gay to court their pleasant way,  
As, good-faced sir, eke you to-day.'

'And prithee, sir, since you divine  
Men's fortunes, say, what may be mine?  
With whom in Paris shall I dine?'

*shroud*, shelter.

*mote*, might.

*aboon*, above.

*array*, garments, rich apparel.

*perfay*, by my faith.

*asperse*, bespatter.

*beseen*, clothed, clad.

## An Invitation to Dine with the Cardinal 71

' The song may answer, if it can ;  
Now let me think how it began.  
I mind me thus three verses ran :

" The King he hath his table dight,  
Feast merrily the live-long night.  
Come, courtiers, come, good appetite !

The queen she hath her table laid,  
Come courtiers all, each well apaid,  
Shall at his side have lovely maid.

The cardinal his board hath spread.  
The wine, the wine, it floweth red.  
With a cup of it lose not your head ! "

' I' faith, it was his Grace's hest  
By messenger to me address  
That I should be his whilom guest.'

' Such fortune is most gratulate,  
Nor, sir, my query improbate,  
Who bears his messages alate ? '

' Faith, let me see, ay, he was tall,  
Beshrew me if I can recall  
His face, his look, eyes, nose and all.'

' Belike a birth-mark neath one eye  
From which his glance falls oft awry,  
Speech somewhat short and may be dry.'

*dight*, prepared, arrayed.  
*hest*, injunction.  
*improbate*, object to,

*apaid*, satisfied.  
*gratulate*, pleasing.  
*alate*, of late,

## 72 An Invitation to Dine with the Cardinal

' Good deed, you know, I wis his chap,  
And all his features like a map,  
And eke his Eminence mayhap.'

' 'Tis said by those whose tongues wag free  
That twixt his Eminence and me  
A blood-relationship there be.

But sir, i' faith, it were more fit  
You should not grasp their bitter wit,  
Nor guess how nigh the clout they hit.

The Cardinal his board hath spread,  
The wine like blood it floweth red—  
For a cup of it lose not your head.

Mark whither turns your gallant steed.  
The act, meseems, it well mote rede.  
Mount, southward ride, and ride with speed.'

*good deed*, of a truth, verily.

*chap*, cheek, jaw—hence face.

*clout*, cloth (a white cloth was used as the centre of a target in archery).

*rede*, counsel, advise.

# Ballades of Alsace

## THE CLOCK OF STRASBURG MINSTER

**I**N Strasburg minster in days of eld  
Stood a clock that all folks in wonderment  
held.

Not a minute sped on its backward way  
But 'twas chronicled there with each hour and  
day,

And eke the months brought they sunshine or  
rime

Were there as leaves in that record of time ;

And the shadowed forms of the moon and sun

Were there in the gilding metal done ;

And the breaking forth of Phoebus' steeds

With the advent of Night in her ebon weeds.

In turn child, youth, man, and crone used tell

The quarter hours on a silver-tongued bell ;

Then Death with his hammer's brazen clang

The doomed hours into eternity rang.

And Mercury with frequent gest

Stood there to work all at his will and hest.

Round the earth-ball all and the stars beyond

Moved free to the waving of his wand.

And when the bells sweet chorals 'gan ring,

All folks gathered to see the wonder thing.

*eld, the olden time.*

## 74 The Clock of Strasburg Minster

Now he who thus wrought for Strasburg town  
Was Isaac Habricht of good renown ;  
No master wright was as skilled as he,  
And he harboured scant fear of rivalry.  
In their praise of a work to which all bowed,  
The Mayor and the aldermen were loud ;  
In council they met his skill to acclaim,  
And on each man's lips was the clockmaker's  
name.

Good hap they observed in gleeful tone,  
'Twas to have such a clock for Strasburg alone.  
For Strasburg alone—but one there opined  
He could fashion another had he a mind.  
Had he a mind ! 'twas there the rub—  
Obeyed he the hests of Beelzebub ?  
Of Beelzebub whose craft and skill  
Were equal to his love of ill.

And as they bandied opinions free,  
The fiend with Habricht oft coupled would be  
Then uprose the Mayor with bearing grave,  
And thus to his fellows his thoughts he gave :  
' Meseems we are at a pretty pass,  
When our hopes are shattered like splintered  
glass.

We had built on the notion oft expressed  
That our clock of all clocks would be the best.  
And now as I learn the bruit goes round  
That for three such Habricht himself hath  
bound.

One such masterpiece is enow to crown  
A long life's work with just renown.

*wright, artisan.*

*bruit, rumour.*

**The Clock of Strasburg Minster 75**

But to engine such gyns now two and now three,  
It savours, my friends, of sheer demonry.  
The heads they nodded and brows grew stern,  
For Habricht it boded an evil turn,  
For to void a soul where deils wont to dwell,  
Men algates borrowed the ways of hell.  
Or e'er he had fared to another land  
On his shoulder was laid a ruthless hand.  
To the council a prisoner then he came  
Where enow erst they could not laud his name.  
And there he learnt the sentence dread  
That his eyes should be plucked forth from his  
head.

'O, sirs, an my sight ye will take away,  
Grant this my prayer, a while's delay.  
Ere my days I must pass in the endless mirk,  
There's need of some change to achieve my work.  
Should I leave it thus, I am sore afraid  
Ye full soon would not be so well apaid.  
Much it mislikes me that for aught  
The sum of my efforts should come to naught.'  
And they let him go with saw and file,  
At the gyns again to labour awhile.  
With persistence grim and a master's power,  
He filed away for many an hour :  
He filed so well that for evermore  
The wheels would not move as they moved afore.  
Of his eyne he was robbed, a fruitless theft—  
The robbers themselves in the lurch were left.  
And the Mayor and the council vainly raged,  
Whiles the clock-work in idleness year long aged.

*engine*, put together, fit up.

*gyns*, engines, pieces of mechanism.

*algates*, always.

*apaid*, satisfied.



## THE BARON OF EGISHEIM

## FYTTE I

'WHAT wind, O beldame, blew thee here ?  
 Who dost like a wrinkled leaf appear,  
 Or like the arc of the crescent moon.  
 Will it blow your ladyship back eftsoon ?'  
 'Now, keeper of the baron's gate,  
 There's wind and to spare in thy addled pate.  
 From a sayer of sooth the baron were fain  
 To hear his weird, be it good hap or bane.  
 Now, see, he anears, for his hunting train  
 At the bend of the road trots twain and twain :  
 Two boars, a wolf and a stag in its prime.  
 All hail to thee, Baron of Egisheim !  
 For strong is thy bow, and broad is thy fee,  
 And great in its eld and ancientry.  
 But, puissant lord, thy power would grow  
 Could'st thou the future aforehand know.'  
 'Aroint ! false gammer, so swart o' blee  
 A jackdaw, my fay, would sing truer than thee.'  
 'Who counsel takes with the daws of the air  
 With his counsellor mote make a pair.'

*eftsoon*, soon again.

*weird*, destiny.

*fee*, domain, property.

*ancientry*, ancientness.

*swart*, dark, dusky.

*my fay*, faith.

*sayer of sooth*, fortune-teller.

*anears*, nears.

*eld*, age, old age.

*aroint*, begone ! avaunt !

*blee*, complexion.

*mote*, might.

' Begone belive, or maybe thine eyne  
 Will be their dish when the corbies dine.'  
 ' In each man's hand his lot doth lie,  
 Who reads it not will redeless die.'  
 ' Come back, come back, thou malapert quean,  
 And cipher my palm for what may be seen.'  
 ' So welcome, so illcome the truth may be  
 Have I thy word that I go scot-free ?'  
 ' Here's a silver groat to quit thy due,  
 And naught hast thou to fear or to rue.'  
 ' Thy line of life is broad, good lord, look,  
 Till it bendeth here like a bishop's crook ;  
 By that crook springs forth a branch hard by  
 Where the line of thy heart athwart doth lie ;  
 That branch it points this way I deem  
 To the mount where Jupiter rules supreme ;  
 Beshrew me but thy son one day  
 Than thee will wield a greater sway,  
 The while he sits enthroned aboon  
 Thou'lt kiss the dust upon his shoon.'  
 The baron upon his table gazed—  
 The sibyl had fled ere his eyes he raised.

## FYTTE II

Through the greenwood all in the morning-tide  
 The baron and his ranger ride.  
 The birds they sing, the scene is fair,

*belive*, quickly, without any delay.

*corbies*, crows.

*cipher*, decipher.

*quit*, satisfy.

*shoon*, shoes.

*redeless*, without counsel.

*illcome*, unwelcome.

*aboon*, above.

*table*, the palm of the hand.

With the baron in croup why rideth care ?

' Sir Count, my bugle's mote would call

The hounds about us one and all ! '

' Wind not, wind not, anon the chase—

My mood is now for a slower pace.

My thoughts beat on the many wrongs,

Of one who long to the past belongs :

With the holy Louis, oh, ill it did fare

Through the rebel sons whom his good queen  
bare ;

A sire with fractious sons may rest

As peacefully as in a viper's nest.

Who breeds and rears such a mutinous brood

He'll reap as he soweth, by the rood !

And faith ! this sibyl's augury

Says I to my heir must crouch aknee ! '

' Sir Count, of all hawks here's the best make-  
hawk :

She would say she's in yarak could she but talk.'

' On yon distant crag towards the rising sun

A pair of eagles have nested and won.

The rock is their hold, the air their demesne,

And rival none have they ever seen.

If their young, say, ranger, say,

In an upstart mood should dispute their sway,

With an arrow, now say, my forster true,

For the peace of their nest aught could'st thou  
not do ?

An eaglet's heart could'st thou not bring

To the cairn of the mountain's ancient king ? '

*aknee*, kneeling.

*make-hawk*, a hawk used to train others.

*in yarak*, in good condition.

*won*, dwell.

*hold*, stronghold.

## FYTTE III

Through the greenwood all in the morning-tide  
The ranger he walks with a lad at his side.  
The birds they sing, the scene is fair,  
Why then with the ranger stalketh care?  
And he mutters, list, as along he strides,  
'On her whose eldritch voice misguides  
A threefold malison rest for aye!'  
So on they fare till the set of day.  
On the morrow the ranger aloné returns;  
His cheek is pale but his grey eye burns,  
As he walks to the terrace parapet,  
Where the baron sits with doubts beset.  
And the sun as it sinks afar in the west  
Leaves the land and the count to go to rest.  
But on that sculptured balustrade  
The ranger a gory heart key-cold hath laid.  
'Ne'er ask of me, Count, or how or where  
I took that heart which lieth there;  
Nor seek me with gold e'er to requite,  
But bury the deed in the deep of night.'  
He's gone and enshrouding shades close round  
The count as he sits with his eyes on the ground.  
The spell is now broken and powerless the bane,  
For this makes the witch's bodements vain.

## FYTTE IV

The days they came, the days they went,  
And the baron's head adown was bent,

*eldritch*, harsh sounding.

*key-cold*, very cold.

Like his who on his shoulders bears  
 A load of sin or a load of cares.  
 His hair had whitened that erst was grey.  
 The menials watched him with dismay :  
 Why then at the hour of crepuscule  
 Falls he in a fit of woe and dule ?  
 ' Come hither, groom, bring water, bring  
 As clear as flows from our garden spring,  
 And pour it there where the stone is red ;  
 My hand erstwhile it must have bled.  
 And now to the chaplain with this prayer  
 That he to my chamber mount the stair.'  
 ' Sir Count, godden, the air is chill,  
 Thou sent'st for me, thou art not ill ? '  
 ' Hark priest, our Rhine rolls its mighty course  
 Till it comes to the sea and is lost perforce.  
 And eke my line will be in like case,  
 When I sit no more in the ingle-place.  
 This thought it is that makes me sad,  
 And the thought of one who died as a lad.  
 And when my soul flows o'er with rue  
 To God I oft kneel, I kneel and sue.  
 O priest, I wis that with holy shrift  
 In the darkest of clouds there comes a rift.'  
 ' Such comfort as lies in the cloister's pale  
 It is thine, O Count, for thy good and hale.  
 Should that not vail, why then from home  
 As a pilgrim must thou fare to Rome.'

*crepuscule*, twilight.

*erstwhile*, a short time ago.

*case*, condition.

*wis*, know.

*vail*, avail.

*dule*, sadness.

*godden*, good even.

*ingle-place*, fire-place.

*hale*, well-being.

## FYTTE V

What see the eagles that tower aheight  
 'Midst the snow-clad Alps in their airy flight?  
 On their southern slope a long winding train  
 Of pilgrims who zigzag towards the plain,  
 And in their wake with a look forspent  
 Crawls an old, old man on his staff y-bent,  
 And little by little he inches along,  
 Till in Rome he stands with the pilgrim throng.  
 And the Vatican's doors to him open at last.  
 To the Pope's own chamber abashed he hath  
 past.

'O, father of all the Christentie,  
 To thee I come to bend the knee.  
 Beneath a load of sin I groan,  
 Oh grant my prayer and hear my moan.'  
 'God thee with strength, my son, endow!  
 What is thy deed? Here make avow.'  
 'Once I with a son by God was blest—  
 He died, O father, 'twas at my hest—  
 A witch's words filled my heart with dread—  
 The woodland mould was his last bed.'  
 The Pope mused awhile, then rising he stepped  
 To a secret drawer where a scroll he kept.  
 'Now lythe and list to this yellow scroll,  
 For a page of the past it doth enroll.  
*Through the greenwood all in the morning-tide*  
*A ranger once walked with a lad at his side.*

*ahight*, on high.

*Christentie*, Christendom.

*hest*, injunction, command.

*forspent*, wearied out.

*avow*, avowal, confession.

*lythe*, pay attention.

*The birds they sang, the scene was fair  
But yet with the ranger there stalked care.  
"Oh whither, good ranger, will this pathway lead?"  
"O'er hill and o'er dale and along through the mead."  
"When I am a man then wander I may  
Alone in the forest the live-long day;  
For the big, big trees and the streams I love  
And the soft, soft coo of the sweet ringdove."  
"Aye, thy heart's in the woods, lad, that I well  
mind—  
"Twas a gift thou erst mad'st to the spotted hind."  
"Good ranger, I tire, mote I rest a while?"  
"Nay, nay, lest the wood-witch us should beguile."  
"But the end of our walk, is it nigh?—is it far?"  
"We shall see it anon by the light of a star.  
Straight roads are short, but they turn not back,  
And the path to thy home hath a winding track."  
"I am weary, good ranger, my legs they are sore,  
And they crook till I think I can step no more."  
"Bear up, gentle laddie, for we must be yare,  
Or of Bruin the bear else we may be ware.  
See yonder, see yonder, there's a cot by a brook  
And 'tis there thou shalt sleep in its ingle-nook."  
And 'twas there that I slept in its ingle-nook.  
In every limb the count he shook.*

*yare, quick, alert, ready.  
ingle-nook, fire-place.*

*ware, aware.*

## THE CLOCK OF BÂLE

GA<sup>I</sup>NST the ramparts of Bâle two lovers  
once leant,

And, gazing down o'er a battlement,  
Saw a moon-litten host flung far and wide,  
That leaguered the town on every side.

' Say, Rolf, are yonder men's casques that gleam  
Or ancients that free in the night wind stream ? '

' My Bertha dear angel,' the lad he quoth,

' 'Tis as likely each or it may be both.'—

And the minutes unnoticed slipped prestly by,  
As this couple a-dream watched plain and sky.

' Say, Rolf, out there towards the wind-swept  
wrack

Didst thou not hear the wild ducks quack ? '

' I heard them not, blossom, my thoughts they  
went

Along the lane of sweet content.'

So one after one the minutes sped fast,

And little they recked how many had past.

' Say, Rolf, hear'st thou not in the air aheight  
The whirr of the wild goose winging its flight ? '

' I hear it not, but full well I see

That thou ever the warder's daughter must be.'

And ever nor slow nor yet in haste

With his measured step Time onward paced.

*ancients, banners.  
content, contentment.*

*prestly, quickly.  
aheight, high up, above.*



' List, Rolf, by yon buttress with bated breath  
 One speaks, lend ear to what he saith.'  
 ' When the clock shall strike the midnight hour,  
 They'll scale the wall and seize gate and tower.  
 Twice fifteen we are, a trusty band,  
 To bear to the scalers a helping hand.  
 The watchers mote think all goeth athwart ;  
 For days the camp hath seemed half amort ;  
 The gyns of war have ceased to speak,  
 And our preux they deem are ale-knights weak.  
 The drowsy burghers thus soothed alate  
 Are snoring abed and misdoubt not their fate.  
 Anon they will wake and mark to their cost  
 How in fancied safety one findeth frost.  
 The time to strike e'en now draweth nigh.'  
 ' Rolf, the moon hath set, 'tis soon twelve—  
 come fly.'

\* \* \*

Who treads the stair with such breathless speed ?  
 ' My daughter, thy errand come rede me, rede.'  
 ' There's treason afoot, and some thirty lurk  
 About the wall 'neath the cover of mirk.  
 They lurk there to seize the tower and gate,  
 And the stroke of twelve is the signal they wait.  
 From the traitor within and the enemy's glaive,  
 O God of our fathers the town now save !'  
 ' To the syndic haste, Bertha, thy story tell,  
 Let the tocsin sound from the warning bell,  
 O Bâle, in the hour of thy jeopardy,

*amort*, lifeless.

*preux*, gallants, valiants.

*ale-knights*, tipsters.

*misdoubt*, suspect.

*rede*, relate.

*gyns*, engines, mechanical

contrivances.

*alate*, of late.

*findeth frost*, meets with  
disaster.

I'll tread on the wild-worm of traiterye.  
 Then up he sprang to the clock aboon,  
 And set its hands by an hour too soon,  
 And as midnight came like a minute gun  
 O, fateful and solemn the clock struck one.  
 And anon on the air rang the note of alarm,  
 And voiced the call to the burghers to arm.  
 But the bell as it clanged in that tocsin's yell  
 On the traitors' ears like a death knell fell.

*wild-worm, serpent.*  
*aboon, above.*

*traiterye, treachery.*



# Ballades of Holland

## THE BEARD OF THE KING OF SPAIN

'SAY, cripple, an thou must go  
With limping gait and slow,  
Thy lot it may be dost owe  
To the men of the king of Spain ?'

'List, Sirs, and to ye I'll tell  
What to my poor leg befell  
Through the work of that fiend of hell,  
That is hight the king of Spain.

It was in ninety-one  
They deemed us all fordone ;  
But the long fight was not won  
By the host of the king of Spain.

To the despot we would not cringe,  
An a gate we must force or unhinge,  
We had sworn that we would singe  
The beard of the king of Spain.

True beggars bold and free,  
All doughty-handed we,  
On a snare had come to 'gree  
For the bills of the king of Spain.

*hight*, called.

*bills*, billmen, pikemen.

*gree*, agree.

## 88 The Beard of the King of Spain

Nigh Zutphen lay a fort  
Where our peasants would resort  
To traffic at its port  
For the pelf of the king of Spain.

'Twas there we set the hay,  
All in the month of May,  
That was to reave away  
That hold from the king of Spain.

Five stalwarts deils to fight  
Were then as peasants dight,  
That we mote break the might  
Of the cursèd king of Spain.

And five were kirtled eke,  
And each one shaved his cheek  
For that he mote take wreak  
For the lust of the king of Spain.

And I was a may to boot,  
Who well I trow could shoot,  
And wing the flying coot,  
Or a bill of the king of Spain.

And maunds of eggs we bare  
With fish and fowl then rare,  
O, 'twas a goodly fare  
For the dons of the king of Spain.

And for that we mote please  
With these commodities  
We took some rounds of cheese  
For the rats of the king of Spain.

*port*, the great gate of a castle or town.  
*hay*, net or snare.      *take wreak*, take vengeance.  
*may*, maid.      *maunds*, baskets.  
*mote*, might.

**The Beard of the King of Spain 89**

'Twas nigh the great fort's gate  
We came betimes and sate,  
And there we placed the bait  
For the rats of the king of Spain.

And as soon they did appear  
We watched the questing leer  
Of each whiskered musketeer  
Who fought for the king of Spain.

Their leader he chattered Dutch,  
But when he my arm did clutch,  
Perdy! it was too much,  
Take that for the king of Spain!

And as I saw him dead,  
To the nether world thus sped,  
A thought flashed through my head—  
Would that *he* were the king of Spain.

Then a troop that perdu lay  
Joined prestly in the fray,  
Till we tore that flag away  
That waved for the king of Spain.

But ere we could cry game  
A blow that hoxt me came,  
And left me alway lame—  
And a curse on the king of Spain!

'Tis an ill I may abear,  
For the trumpets loud did blare,  
And we had plucked a hair  
From the beard of the king of Spain.'

*prestly*, promptly.      *cry game*, cry victory.  
*hoxt*, houghed.

## THE DEATH OF SCHENK (1589)

ON the banks of the Rhine there once  
flourished

The chief of a freebooting band,  
Who from farmers and peasants took levies  
With a rough and oft merciless hand.

He had served 'neath the banner of Orange,  
He had won the battles of Spain,  
Then breaking allegiance to Philip  
Had returned to his country again.

Each day he was fighting or drinking,  
And, when he was flushed with wine,  
He would treat all his men in his fury  
As though they were only kine.

'Twas oft told how he caused some to leap down  
From steeples high in the air ;  
For ne'er did his hard heart soften  
At the sound of a cry or a prayer.

When he led his troops forth to the foray  
He was sure to be seen in the van,  
But if his small force was retreating  
He was ever the very last man.

So the fame of that desperate rover,  
And the force of his word or decree,  
Spread over the lands of fair Munster,  
And south o'er the Bishop's see.

Till mothers would say to their children :  
' Hark ! here's Schenk at the door, so beware !'  
And the youngsters would fly away screaming  
As though a black demon were there.

Schenk's sconce was the name of a fortress  
Where the Waal in its boisterous race  
Leaves the Rhine to pursue its course northward,  
A river of sluggish pace.

And forth from his stronghold he sallied  
All in haste on a summer day,  
To possess himself of a convoy  
That was quietly stealing away.

O'er a thousand who stood to defend it  
Were ere long in so narrow a strait,  
That fleeing they left all behind them,  
The horses, the treasure, and plate.

But down on the Waal at some distance  
Rose the towers of Nymegen town ;  
And the thought of its riches protected  
Caused Schenk's brow to contract in a frown.

Then he vowed he would soon be the master  
Of a city so fair and so free,  
And with curses he cried, ' 'Tis worth more than  
A glove full of pepper for me.'<sup>1</sup>

So he mustered his troopers together  
All clad in their armour bright,  
And filling some twenty-five barges,  
Down the river they droppèd at night.

<sup>1</sup> The annual tribute paid to the Emperor.



92      **The Death of Schenk**

As the foremost drew nigh to the city  
Bold Schenk with a few sprang ashore,  
And, regardless of those who still tarried,  
Set forth on the road to explore.

On they stole to St. Anthony's gateway,  
Both he and his followers true,  
Where they fell on the guard who were napping  
As watchers are wont to do.

Unmolested then forward they hastened  
Through the gloomy and silent street,  
For the burghers, all covered and curtained,  
Heard never a sound of their feet.

But they came in due time to a mansion  
Whose front looked forth on the square,  
For this was the place of assembly  
In that dark and risky affair.

There they passed through the corridors swiftly  
Till they burst in the stately old hall,  
Where a flood of bright light fell upon them  
Reflected from mirror and wall.

For within there were signs of a wedding,  
And dancers scattered around  
Moved hither and thither in cadence  
To the harp and the viol's soft sound.

But, checked by the sudden intrusion,  
The mirth and the music had ceased ;  
Whilst the couples stood gazing in wonder  
At the guests unbid to the feast.

Lips trembled but uttered no greeting,  
Flushed cheeks turned rapidly pale,  
And the frolickers seemed to be spellbound  
At the sight of those figures in mail.

The troopers had halted an instant,  
And they watched the proceedings amazed,  
One and all with their venturesome leader  
By the glare of the candles half-dazed.

The revellers read the dark purpose  
Of the man who so seldom smiled,  
For many there knew his rough nature  
To tenderness never beguiled.

With short cries of alarum ill-stifled  
Through the doors and the windows they fled,  
And their laughter was heard no longer—  
But the clank of steel armour instead.

Then Schenk on the square had men posted,  
Whiles the mansion he fortified,  
As he issued his orders, flinging  
A curse on the parting bride.

But the fugitives, spreading quickly,  
Had aroused the slumbering town,  
Whose inhabitants fresh from their couches  
To the conflict came hurrying down.

With them was the force of numbers  
Which Schenk could ill withstand,  
For gathering they well-nigh encircled  
His tiny yet resolute band.

**The Death of Schenk**

Three times at the point of the falchion  
He drove them away from the place,  
But ever anew they pressed round him  
Till his troopers no longer had space.

Yet he fought at the door of the mansion,  
Still dealing forth blow upon blow ;  
Nor retreated within till the daylight  
In grey glimmers began to glow.

Mad with rage, he then stamped as he called for  
The men on whose aid he relied,  
For a few who with him might have held back  
The rush of that terrible tide.

From the house to the street he was driven  
'Midst a frantic and orderless throng,  
For his troopers close huddled together  
Now in panic all struggled along.

'Twas in vain that he bade them to rally,  
Or the pate of one here and there cleft,  
For the others fled only the faster ;  
And alone in his plight he was left.

As at last he fell back to the river,  
Far away from the craft at the quay,  
Still struggling against the swift current  
The rest of his force he could see.

He turned and the foe was upon him,  
But his teeth he still savagely gnashed,  
Then quick in the last of the barges,  
Though already o'erloaded, he dashed.

**But it filled, and, weighed down by his armour,  
He sank like a stone outright,  
And the Waal, then a torrent, rolled over  
The head of that brigand and knight.**

## STAVOREN

## FYTTE I

'SAY, fisher, what song sing'st thou o' the  
sea?'

'I sing of a town that once used to be,  
Of a town so rich that its merchants' gains  
Would have filled with gold a long line of wains :  
Stavoren 'twas hight and it held the key  
Of this inlet thou see'st, the Zuyderzee.'

'And why in the depths of the glassy green  
brine

With a roving gaze search thy fair blue eyne?'

'O'er the roofs of the mansions my eye now  
roams

Where those trader princes erst had their  
homes :

The lady Richberta, the legend says,  
Lived in splendour that filled all her peers with  
amaze.

In her marble hall she wonned in state.

But, oh ! if her heart had been as great !

To her door one day a stranger came

With a swarthy face and an eastern name,

And he craved from her, as Mussulmans use,

Some salt and bread as the new-comer's dues.

In that house nigh the sea there was salt galore,

*amaze, wonder.*

*wonned, dwelt.*

But maugre rich dishes of bread no store ;  
 And they sought ahigh and they sought alow,  
 And vain was the hurrying to and fro.  
 But the paynim he sat there a while and spun  
 A tale of the land o' the rising sun.  
 Of its wonders in many words he told,  
 Till the daylight dusked and the day grew old.  
 But for all he there saw scant phrases he found  
 To mark his esteem or to voice his stound.  
 Quoth Richberta " Good stranger who gracest  
     our feast  
 Thy mind still dwells in the pictured east."  
 " Fair dame of the Norland," he answered, " the  
     blaze  
 Of thy mansions' great riches makes poor all  
     praise,  
 And my eye is bewitched by the glamourie  
 Of thy stuffs of the grain and the cramoisie.  
 But this riot of beauty leaves one thing wished  
 More precious than pearl that fisher.e'er fished."  
 " Now limn me this thing, which if money can  
     buy,  
 Shall be brought by my ships that o'er ocean  
     ply."  
 " To thy wisdom, dear lady, that search I must  
     leave,  
 They command success who most justly  
     conceive."  
 Thus outspake the stranger, and stilly anon  
 From the midst of the revellers he had gone.

\* \* \*  
*maugre*, in spite of.  
*stound*, astonishment.  
*cramoisie*, crimson.

*paynim*, pagan.  
*glamourie*, magic.

## FYRTE II

“ Commander of my caracks three  
 To-morrow be yare to put to sea,  
 To put to sea and to sail to the west,  
 And lythe and listen to my behest,  
 To sail round the coasts of the western isles,  
 Where the sun on their waters months-long  
 smiles.

And seek for something in value beyond  
 Rich stuffs or gold or diamond.

Aye perquest for something of greater worth  
 Than aught thou hast shipped from the ends of  
 the earth.

An thy search in those regions should be in vain,  
 Then southward thou’lt steer o’er the trackless  
 main,

Till thou feel’st on thy face hot Afric’s breeze  
 By the towering pillars of Hercules.

Then through the Mid Sea thou shalt gather  
 way,

And plough the dark waves where the sea-geese  
 play.”

The commander sailed forth with his ships  
 three in line,

He sailed on while the moon changed four times  
 nine,

And cruising he touched at every port,  
 Where baubles and trinkets he saw of each sort,  
 From the carven tusk of the elephant.

*yare*, ready.

*lythe*, pay attention.

*perquest*, search thoroughly.

*gather way*, pursue one’s course.

*sea-geese*, dolphins.

To the viald perfumes of the Levant,  
 The lapis lazuli, the emerald gem,  
 And the filigree woven anadem.  
 But naught there was 'mongst the spoils of the  
 east  
 That his hope to have compassed his ends  
 increased.  
 And, as time wore on, week after week  
 Lo ! one of his caracks sprang a leak.  
 The salt brine soaked the breadstuffs all,  
 Till the crew for drink 'gan oft to call.  
 Nor cask nor sack throughout the hold  
 But soon was a mass of greenish mould.  
 Day in, day out, on; on they sailed,  
 And more than one in his stomach ailed.  
 'What boot all these treasures to my crew  
 When there's little to drink and naught to  
 chew ?'  
 But good winds brought them to land at last  
 O, fain they were to break their fast !

### FYTTE III

" My watchman, what ships on the sea see'st  
 thou ? "  
 " Three sails I mark on th' horizon's brow,  
 Three vessels I scan on the weltering sea.  
 Methinks they ride right heavilie."  
 On the morrow the watchman sent word to the  
 dame  
 To tell how her caracks to harbour came.  
 Hotfoot the water's edge she sought  
*anadem, chaplet, garland.*



To learn what cargo her vessels had brought.  
 Then outspake the commander free and bold  
 "O, many a treasure have I in my hold,  
 But one there is makes the others all vain :  
 'Tis a full, full freight of the golden grain.  
 And but for this godsend, this precious store,  
 Stavoren, dear town, we had seen no more."  
 Quick the blood to Richberta's cheek it rushed,  
 And a lock of hair from her forehead she  
 brushed.

"What folly is this ? commander, rede.  
 Have we herds of hogs that we must feed ?  
 As lief had I thou hadst brought back  
 A lading of the green sea-wrack.  
 On one side of my ships the grain came aboard  
 Then out on the other straight let it be poured."  
 To the hungry sea the sacks were heaved,  
 While a hungry crowd stood there sore grieved,  
 And a forest of hands shot up in the air,  
 And cries and wails broke forth of despair.  
 But prideful and cold as a statue the dame  
 Saw the last of the sacks pass beyond reclaim.  
 Round the spot where all the good grain sank  
 The mud oozed up and formed a bank.  
 It grew in time, what with sludge and slesch,  
 Till across the haven it 'gan to reach.  
 The ships no more at the port could call,  
 And poverty stood on the threshold of all.  
 Then a murmur arose in Stavoren town  
 One wintry day as the sun went down,

*rede*, declare, relate.  
*sea-wrack*, sea-weed.  
*slesch*, slime, mud.

*lading*, cargo.  
*sludge*, mud, ooze.

## Stavoren

101

And the cry it swelled in the alleys and courts  
 'Mongst the townsfolk of many and sundry sorts.  
 "This blight on our traffic must reach its term,  
 Ere our ship shall sink let us drive out the worm."  
 And many a man with litten torch  
 Hied through the streets to Richberta's porch ;  
 Whiles she with a face like a spectre white  
 Fled furtively forth, and was lost in the night.  
 Who had listened then to the rote of the surge  
 Had heard a moan like a plaining dirge,  
 As though the waves with that sound had fore-  
     cast  
 The nearing of the tempests' blast.  
 Who had then stood on the northmost land  
 Had seen a dread sight on Stavoren's strand,  
 Had seen the sea roll up in its might  
 Till the bank and the mansions sank out of  
     sight.'

*litten, lighted.*

*rote, the noise of the surge on the shore.*

THE WHITE DOE

THE PETITION

**W**HAT'S i' the wind so vagabond  
Gallant hound, that thou scentest  
yond ?

Back to heel, backare er all too prest  
Gar thou wilt in one unrest.  
Maiden who kneelst at this wayside cross,  
What in thy bosom doth travail and toss ?  
Breathe me thy plaint, impart thy prayer,  
Prithee tell what woe, what care  
At creek of day  
Drew thee away  
So rathe from bed.

Countess, alack my heart is sore  
For that my father is no more.  
Fevered he lay long, long days nine ;  
Wearily I watched him dwine.  
Watching by night at his bedside  
Warning had I of what mote betide.  
Pale the moon rose one night and wan  
When thro' the treen there passed and was gone  
A white doe fast,  
And he sighed his last ;  
His life had sped.

*yond*, yonder.  
*prest*, prompt, ready.  
*rathe*, early.

*backare*, keep back.  
*creek*, dawn.  
*dwine*, pine away.

Scant six days had I made my moan  
 When I was chilled as 'twere to stone.  
 Alan my brother, so it fell,  
 Called i' the night for drink from the well.  
 As at his cry astart I woke  
 Sheen the moon shone on the dricksie oak.  
 Back as from the well I sprung  
 Like a streak the treen among  
     The white doe past  
     And I found aghast  
     His soul had fled.

Tristful my sister and I must fain  
 Gravewards follow their corses twain.  
 Sith gaingiving oftwhile have I  
 That her eke I may see die,  
 That I may see her dwindle and peak,  
 She who is but a grissel weak.  
 Prayers have I prayed God keep her from scath,  
 Death he walketh in her path ;  
     An the white doe pass  
     They'll say a mass  
     For one more dead.

Woe is me and to this countrie  
 Where the white doe wandereth free ;  
 Weaklings' souls they are her prey  
 And she beareth them far away.

*scant*, scarcely, barely.

*tristful*, sad, downhearted.

*gaingiving*, misgiving.

*scath*, harm, hurt.

*dricksie*, decayed.

*sith*, since then.

*grissel*, a tender or delicate

[person.

**The White Doe**

Gentle dame, this is my boon,  
Thy fair son he may full soon  
Arm himself all for the chase  
And with hounds of swiftest pace  
    May go on quest  
    With arbalest  
    Her blood to shed.

## THE YOUNG COUNT'S LOVE SONG

Forth I strolled one April morn  
Down a lane's meanders,  
Thorough the woods by paths ne'er worn  
Save by the stag when he wanders.  
Grangrel Cupid me did guide  
Hoodman undiscerning,  
Mocking me when I must bide  
Halting at some turning.

Slouchy winter had gone his gait,  
Left the field to Flora.  
Blooms in foison from her estate  
Fell from her lap by the score-a.  
Blooms they fell at a maiden's feet  
In the jolly spring-time ;  
Twined they were by her fingers neat  
In the happy ring-time.

There's a well within a grot  
Lies in the heart of the dingle.  
Ferns and violets in that spot  
Blow together and mingle.  
Thither it happed that morn I came,  
Found there a pensive lily,  
Blanche, it was that fair flower's name,  
Bent o'er the water stilly.

*grangrel*, wandering, vagrant.

*gait*, way.

Five sling casts' length, from well and wood,  
All with its turrets sorted,  
Noble, a castle, her wonyng stood,  
Rearing its stone crest fortified.  
"Gentle maid here to while a space  
Culling the joys of the present,  
An the thought thou shouldst aggrace  
It were passing pleasant."

Cheerly, cheerly flitted the hours  
In that fairy nooklet.  
Pattering we braided flowers  
Pattering on like a brooklet.  
Visions came as in a glass,  
Never for thought were we gravelled;  
From each field forth we would pass  
Ranging the world as we travelled.

Spring it is the budding tide.  
Hearts o'erflow with passion.  
Fortune fair each pair arride,  
Love is all the fashion.  
May is passing and full soon  
Cuckoos will be singing.  
Time will hobble on to June  
Marriage-bells be ringing.

*sorted*, arranged harmoniously.  
*forted*, fortified, strong.

*wonyng*, dwelling.

THE YOUNG COUNT'S HUNTING SONG.

It is a doe, a milk white doe,  
 That passeth like a gleam.  
 No mortal eye saw her, I trow,  
 Save neath the lunar beam.  
     Elves, elves,  
     Where the rock shelves  
     Bring her to harm.

She erreth here, she erreth there,  
 And stealeth thro' the dell,  
 And as she treadeth everywhere  
 She casts a deathful spell.  
     Fay, fay,  
     Lead her astray  
     Mazed with a charm.

At cockshut hour neath oak or fir  
 For her oft-times I lay.  
 For vain 'twas as the plain to skirr  
 Before the break o' day.  
     Bow, bow,  
     Now lay her low  
     Stain her side red.

With lym and brach by strath and scaur  
 What mote ha' been her shade

*for vain, in vain.*                      *skirr, scour.*  
*lym, a lyam-hound, i.e., one held by a leash.*  
*brach, a kind of hunting-dog.*      *mote, might.*



## The White Doe

I followed fast till all seemed lore  
And the sun had gone to glade.

Hound, hound,  
Bring her to ground,  
Fang her fine head.

And still the bruit of her black work  
Doth fly o'er many a sill;  
And those who venture in the mirk  
Must cross themselves 'gainst ill.

Priest, priest,  
Curse the fell beast,  
Her work undo.

Hard by St. Cath'rine's well alate  
Athwart the moonlit treen  
One saw her pass forerunning fate;  
'Tis there I'll be this e'en.

Bite, bite,  
In her flank white  
Quarrel so true.

*-lore, lost.  
fang, seizure*

*go to glade, set (of the sun),  
bruit, rumour.*

THE OLD NURSE'S LAMENT

Blossom of May  
Faded away,  
Gelid as clay,  
Yestreen my pretty dilling.  
Foster child best  
That on my breast  
Erst wont to rest  
Hearts all with dule are filling.

Thou who anight,  
Clad in weeds white,  
Like a poor sprite,  
By the moon went walking,  
Lovesome in grace,  
Where the lords chase  
There thou didst face  
Mortal-staring Death stalking.

Thee in the holt  
As 'twere a poult,  
Felled one sole bolt  
Loosed by one fast by in cover.

*yestreen*, yester-evening.

*dule*, sorrow.

*to go by the moon*, to be a somnambulist.

*mortal-staring*, grim-visaged.

*poult*, a young partridge or pheasant.

*dilling*, darling.

*weeds*, garments.

**The White Doe**

Speeding amain  
It struck hearts twain !  
See its gore-stain !  
Grief-shot was thy lover.

Grave my Blanche there  
Where sands lie fair,  
Golden as hair,  
Golden for her pillow.  
And all ill banned  
There will I stand  
Lone in the land  
Like a weeping willow.

THE SHEPHERD'S SONG

I

I pipe to the dawn  
On an upland lawn ;  
And sing to my flock as it grazes.  
Whiles down in the dale  
Hangs the curtain pale  
That the sun in its splendour raises.

Oh, there is a sprite,  
Like a fairy light,  
A sprite that erst was a maiden.  
And the old folks say,  
Of a sooth and perfay  
That her heart with love was o'erladen.

By the moonlight sheen  
That sprite may be seen  
Aye pacing as one who is sleeping,  
Still thorough the glade,  
As erstwhile a maid  
To the well where a tryst she was keeping.

Like a sylph it glides  
Where the roebuck hides.  
Its lane it oft while is narrow.  
And as one at fault  
There it maketh halt  
Where her heart was pierced by an arrow.

*thorough, through.*

Left Elfland's horn  
Wind notes that borne  
By Zephyr as she dances,  
With calm may suage  
Through a long-drawn age  
That sprite as the world it trances.

*trances, travels through.*

THE SHEPHERD'S SONG

II

Erst i' the dell,  
As I heard tell,  
Wild, weird, and gaunt  
Harbored a knight ;  
And with affright  
One nighed his haunt.

Hunter high-wrought  
Like a fire-flaught  
Fast he would ride ;  
And his loud cry  
As he swept by  
Woke the hill-side.

Forth burst his song  
Echoing long,  
Filling the air,  
Till with a moan  
Sudden his tone  
Broke in despair.

*fire-flaught, flash of lightning.*

## THE LAY OF THE WILD HUNTSMAN

Wind the horn, wind,  
For stag or hind  
I have no mind,  
But for the doe.  
    Steed, steed,  
    After her speed,  
    Lead the gay rout ;

That ere the light  
Dusks to dim night  
Her I may sight,  
Her harborowe.  
    Erne, erne,  
    Deep in the fern  
    Speer, speer her out.

There in the dale  
Fine shall her bale,  
There she shall quail.  
Hold, I ken Blanche.  
    Woe, woe,  
    There she lies low  
    There she doth sleep.

*harborowe*, track (a stag) to his harbour or covert.  
*erne*, the golden eagle.  
*speer*, search. *fine*, end.

## The White Doe

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Blight on my arm  
That worked her harm.  
There in her barm  
Who'll the blood staunch ?  
Bell, bell,  
Stag on the fell  
For her go weep.

*barm, bosom.*



# Louis XI

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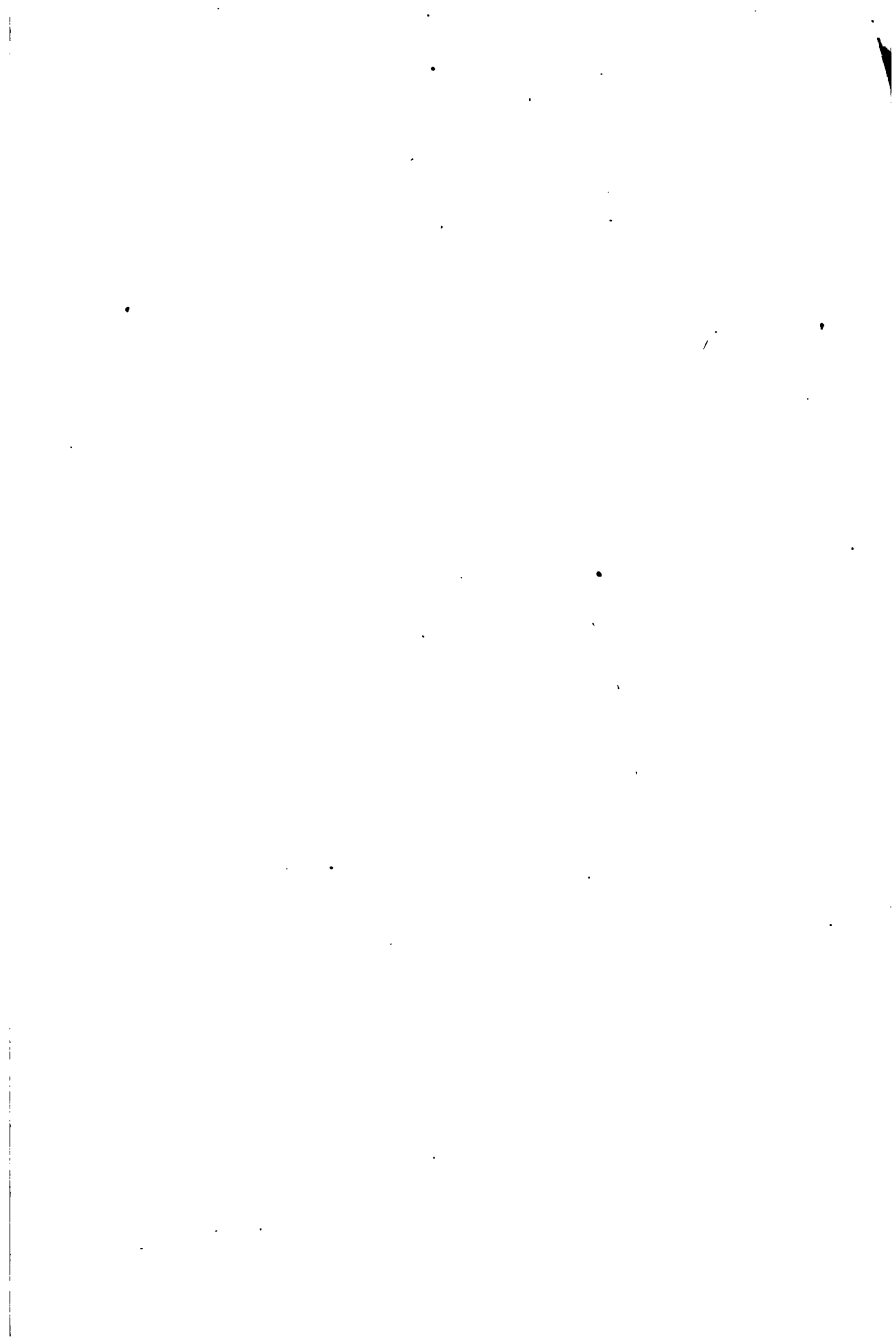
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